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# Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

IAN BROWNLIE — THE NATURE OF THE STATE

FRANÇOIS THORAVAL — CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE COMMON MARKET

MAURICE CORNFORTH — THE LAWS OF DIALECTICS

DISCUSSION:

WILLIAM BARTON — THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND MARXISM

A. CHATER, PETER LATHAM — NO ROOM FOR HOMO SAPIENS?

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# Marxism Today

Vol. 10 No. 10

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# *Editorial Comments*

IN January 1939 J. D. Bernal published one of the great books of our time—*The Social Function of Science*. Its main theme was what science could do for the human race and what Governments and States ought to do in assisting the development of science. Ideas as to the tremendous results which would flow from the deliberate promotion of science, common enough today, were not then even being considered outside a limited circle of people. Indeed it was strongly argued that attempts on the part of the state to promote the development of science might even result in its being stifled.

It is good that *The Science of Sciences*, published in 1964 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Bernal's book, has now been republished as a Pelican.[1]

Seventeen scientists contributed including such well known figures as P. M. S. Blackett, C. F. Powell, Peter Kapitsa (USSR), Joseph Needham, N. W. Pirie and the late J. B. S. Haldane. For the intelligent layman who takes an interest in science, this is one of the most important books published in recent years. There is a personal portrait of J. D. Bernal by Lord Snow, and a summing up "After twenty-five years" by Bernal himself who says:

> "Throughout the course of the history of science, the scientist individually had to exist on sufferance; he worked inevitably for ignorant patrons who could not understand even what he was trying to do, and if they had they would have little wish to further it. Now with the scientists' growth in numbers and importance, this attitude is no longer necessary and will soon be no longer possible. Scientists also recognise their weakness, a lack of contact not so much with the seats of power, as with the people who can be the real beneficiaries of science. When that contact is renewed and improved, we can hope to have a world where science ceases to be a threat to mankind and becomes a guarantee for a better future . . ."

It is worthy of note that some of the most important papers in this volume are concerned with the role of science in the developing countries.

In the introduction to the volume we are told that the work started by *The Social Function of Science* is being continued in a deliberate manner through the formation of a Science of Sciences Foundation. "The object of the Foundation is to promote the application of scientific methods to the understanding of science itself, especially in its relations to society. To this end the Foundation will initiate and support research; maintain a library of publications on science policy and make them available for analysis; organise seminars, conferences and other meetings to promote the aims of the Foundation; organise an annual lecture; publish a journal and such papers, periodicals and books as may best advance the study of the science of science." This will be a fitting development of the work to which Bernal has devoted his life.

[1] *The Science of Sciences*, Pelican 6s.

## *A Myth Exploded*

According to Mr. Woodrow Wyatt, MP, Britain ceased to be a world power when it had to sell masses of stocks and shares to the United States when it was fighting the war alone in 1940. This is a widely accepted belief but it is simply not true. For a number of years past British monopoly capitalism has had more investments in value and in volume invested overseas than in the days of its imperial glory before 1914. This is one of the facts made clear by Mr. A. R. Conan's book on the *Problem of Sterling* (Macmillan 12s. 6d. paperback). There are heavy losses due to the winning of independence by former colonies. The Indian Army is no longer in British control and cannot be used to police the Middle East or South-East Asia. So Britain has heavy overseas military expenditure East of Suez which formerly was met out of the Indian budget, i.e. from the taxation levied on the people of that country. The tribute levied by British capitalism on its former colonies is still immense.

Mr. Conan tells us that British imperialism had about £5,000 million invested abroad before the second war. Of this it lost about £1,500 million during and immediately after the war, leaving £3,500 million. From the moment the second world war ended it commenced to build up its overseas investments again until today the total is at least £10,000 million. Mr. Conan tells us that "within a period of 20 years investment abroad was (in monetary terms) as much as the pre-war accumulation of over a century".

However the effect of this has been nullified by the quite considerable foreign investment inside Britain. No less than £4,000 million of foreign capital (mainly from the U.S.) is now invested inside this country. The effect of these capital imports is described by Mr. Conan as follows:

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> "In the first instance these capital imports replenish the reserves (since they are virtually all from non-sterling countries) but that is only the initial impact; the record shows that the amount now payable as investment income puts a severe strain on current invisibles, while quite possibly there may also be an adverse effect on visible trade."

The effect of short-term movements of foreign capital into Britain on the other hand can be quite disastrous:

> "Short-term capital is essentially volatile, as it moves not in a steady flow but intermittently and its movements are often quickly reversed. Such characteristics can produce harmful repercussions. An inward movement of funds is largely from non-sterling sources and in the first instance adds to the reserves, but the accrual may be only temporary, as the funds may soon be withdrawn."

These flights of foreign funds accentuated the crisis in 1947, 1949, 1957, 1961 and 1964-66. The British economy is clearly weakened by this hot money.

With regard to the recent crises Mr. Conan denies that British wages and salaries are too high and thinks that British exports are doing fairly well. The factors that are hampering the economy are (1) the ever increasing military expenditure, (2) the increased payment of dividends and interest on foreign investments in this country, and (3) the disappearance of any net income from shipping services.

## *Freeze and the Workshop*

While trade unions and wage councils are being told that wages are frozen and that there cannot be the slightest deviation from that policy, the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations is accumulating a mass of material. It has just published a research paper on "The Role of Shop Stewards in British Industrial Relations" by its Research Director, Dr. W. E. J. McCarthy.

The exact number of shop stewards is unknown, something between 100,000 and 200,000 is estimated. The number of full time conveners or trade union representatives of similar status in industry is about 500 and the number giving half their working time to shop stewards work may be 2,000. One-fifth of all shop stewards are reckoned to be losing money as a result of working time lost while doing their jobs—the average loss being about £1 per week. Overall, the number of shop stewards is growing. Between 1947 and 1961 the number of shop stewards in the AEU grew by 56 per cent, while the union membership grew by 30 per cent.

Dr. McCarthy is clear that the stewards are essential to the functioning of the unions. It is only through them that most trade union members are in contact with the union at all; it is their constant activity which maintains the level of the membership, and it is their successful bargaining which more than anything else, demonstrates the value of the union. Dr. McCarthy would like to increase integration of shop stewards in the union structure but is exceedingly conscious of the difficulties. For example workshop negotiations around payment by results are held to be one of the reasons for wage drift and so it has been suggested that some other system of wage determination will have to be adopted. It is clear that this would greatly restrict shop stewards' negotiating rights and would be resisted.

The International Labour Office has issued a booklet assembling all the arguments for an incomes policy[2] and is particularly concerned with changing the system whereby workshop bargaining supplements bargaining around wage rates at the national level. The writers of the ILO study would like an abandonment "of piece-work in many cases and for much more systematic and accurate work study and rate fixing in others".

Clearly wage freezes and incomes policies involve a challenge to workshop bargaining and to the shop stewards who carry it out. A heavy attack on the strongholds of trade unionism is being mounted. A mass sale of Bert Ramelson's pamphlet "The Great Wage Freeze Trick" is absolutely imperative.

## *Monopoly versus the People*

The documents of the international conference on "State Monopoly Capitalism" organised by the French Communist Party, May 26th/29th, 1966, have now been published, in French, in our contemporary *Economie et Politique*.

Representatives of more than 20 European countries, including Britain, attended this conference and discussed ten major reports prepared by the Economic Section of the French Communist Party.

In this issue of *Marxism Today* we publish extensive extracts, in translation, from a report by François Thoraval, which deals particularly with the contradictions that have developed within the Common Market.

The Conference discussed State Monopoly Capitalism from many different aspects—its essential character and definition; its effects on the national economies and at the international level; its connection with inflation and its drive against the living standards of all sections of the people; its internal contradictions; and the way forward for the working class and the other "non-monopoly" classes from State Monopoly Capitalism to democracy and socialism.

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[2] "Prices, Wages and Incomes Policies in Industrialised Market Economies", International Labour Office, 14s. 6d.

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We hope to publish in the near future an article summing up the main feature of the conference and raising certain questions for discussion.

## *Quakers and Marxists*

An important new contribution to the dialogue between Marxists and Christians is a short book entitled *The Moral Challenge of Communism* (Friends Service Council, 6s.), by William E. Barton, General Secretary of the Friends Service Council whose contribution we publish in this issue of *Marxism Today*. Mr. Barton believes that "Christians will have a defective picture of the contemporary world and of their role in it, unless they focus more sharply on ethical aspects of Marxist-Leninist society" and his book is an attempt from a Quaker point of view to remedy this.

Communists, while certainly not accepting all Mr. Barton's judgments, will appreciate his straightforward attempt to clarify a number of problems. It is useful, for instance, to underline as he does "the Marxist emphasis on the close relationship between theory and practice", an emphasis to which Quakers are also sympathetic, for this does much to avoid a barren discussion of abstract "fundamentals" which may well hinder rather than promote useful understanding.

There are, of course, plenty of differences between the Quaker's approach to contemporary and ethical problems and the Marxist's. That Mr. Barton can speak in his subtitle of "Marxist-Leninist society" is evidence of this, for one cannot talk of a Quaker or even of a Christian society in any comparable sense. One cannot therefore conduct a discussion on the basis of simple comparisons, either of aims or practice. But that does not mean that one cannot conduct any sort of useful discussion. Quakers and Communists in fact, when they get together, have remarkably little difficulty in finding common interests and sympathies. It is to be hoped that Mr. Barton's book will lead to an increase in both exploratory discussion and practical action involving Christians and Marxists, and we are glad that he has contributed to the dialogue that is now taking place in *Marxism Today*.

## *British Communities*

Sociologists have been justly criticised for merely describing social phenomena, and neglecting to develop social theory. Ron Frankenburg, in a recent study of British Communities,[3] discussing material accumulated by sociologists in recent years, believes that such studies "can be a most fruitful source of knowledge about our society" but that the proper use of the material involves "generalising grandly, sticking my neck out so that my academic colleagues can hack at it".

Basing his theory on Marx's analysis, he examines surveys of communities ranging from a subsistence-farming hamlet in West Eire to modern urban housing estates. These show the social changes which take place within class society, the way in which social and family relations depend on the way people earn their living; how the demands of farm ownership determine marriage customs; the impact of industry, or of the introduction of "foreigners", on rural communities' social customs; the difference in marital relationships in different economic settings. Frankenburg shows how conflicts arise within classes, and cutting across class frontiers, and discusses the function of conflict, which is not by any means always disruptive; for example the unity of village life may be strengthened by "the adoption of an enemy, real or imagined". An interesting chapter is one on the "latent function" of social activities, in which the author speculates on the probability that social customs (e.g. cock-fighting, and the "joking relationship") may serve a purpose more important than appears on the surface.

His conclusion may be briefly summarised as stating that the polarisation of society into clearly opposed classes only really begins when urbanisation loosens the "networks" which blur class confrontation in rural conditions, and even then develops by a very devious course.

This interesting and provocative essay is a useful antidote to sweeping generalisations sometimes committed by Marxists in this field. One of its assets is that it uses material drawn not solely from the activities of the politically conscious minority, but also from the majority of "non-political" people, who are sometimes dismissed as unimportant. The concluding chapters on urban estates are especially valuable in showing the complexity of social relations even within a fully developed working-class.

## *Soviet Aid to Developing Countries*

The fact that the Soviet Union provides substantial economic and technical help to developing countries is now fairly widely known and recognised. Comprehensive facts and figures about this, however, are not always easily available. From time to time reports have been published on the extent of such economic and technical co-operation between the Soviet Union and a particular country, and sometimes examples are given from a whole group of countries.

A recent report by D. Degtiar, Deputy Chairman, Foreign Economic Relations Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers, and published in *Vneshnyaya Torgovlya*, Issue No. 5, 1966, provides

[3] R. Frankenburg, *Communities in Britain*, Pelican Original, 6s.

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what is possibly the most comprehensive survey of this subject yet available. The report shows that at the beginning of 1966 the Soviet Union was providing assistance in connection with some 600 industrial and other important projects in the countries of Africa and Asia—250 in Africa, and 350 in Asia.

An analysis of the extent of Soviet aid to different branches of the economy shows the heavy direction of this aid to basic industrial development. A percentage breakdown of this aid to developing countries gives the following picture:

| | |
|---|---|
| Industry and geological prospecting | 71 |
| Agriculture (including irrigation) | 7 |
| Transport and communications | 9 |
| Education, culture, public health and sports | 4 |
| Other branches | 9 |

It is important to note that this aid to develop national industries means in fact also assistance to the development of the state sectors of the economy in the different developing countries.

To give some idea of the kind of enterprises being established with Soviet assistance one can refer to the 20 plants and shops of ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, 43 machine-building and metal-working plants, nearly 30 power stations, 16 chemical plants and oil refineries, and 60 enterprises in the light and food industries.

Capacities of the enterprises in production output per annum comprise for example, a steel output of 60 million tons, iron ore extraction 4.3 million tons, coal extraction 2.7 million tons, and oil revenue 8.5 million tons.

## *Emphasis on Heavy Industry*

Major emphasis in providing this industrial help is being placed on the construction by the Soviet Union of heavy industry enterprises. One can take, for example, three fields in which this is evident: (i) steel plants (ii) power stations and (iii) machine building plants. Steel plants include 2 in India, 1 in the UAR, 1 in Algeria, 1 in Ceylon and 1 in Iran. All these are either already operating or are at present under construction. Their total capacity is over 4 million tons. Power stations include, along with the Aswan High Dam in the UAR, important ones in India and Cambodia. Oil refineries as well have been established in India, the UAR, and Ethiopia.

Important machine building plants have been established in India, Iraq, Iran, and UAR. In Afghanistan a nitrogenous fertiliser plant is being established. In the Sudan a milk factory, 2 canneries and 2 elevators are being installed; in Senegal a fish cannery and other enterprises, and in Guinea a cannery and wood sawing plant.

An important form of assistance is that of geological prospecting. It is well known that the reserves of mineral deposits in developing Asian and African countries have not yet been explored sufficiently because the colonialists worked only those deposits that were of interest to them and were not in the least concerned with the requirements of the territories themselves. Now that so many countries in Africa and Asia are independent they are placing special emphasis on the discovery and the best possible use of all their natural resources as an essential task of their economic and social development. Naturally enough these developing countries lack the necessary personnel, equipment, and experience. These are being provided in many ways by the Soviet Union, which is assisting the carrying out of geological surveys in Algeria, Afghanistan, Guinea, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Yemen, Congo (Brazzaville), Mali, the UAR, Pakistan and Syria.

## *Help for Agriculture*

In the field of agriculture a special problem confronts the developing countries. For a long time they have been used as agrarian and raw material appendages of the colonial powers. Their economy was largely distorted in the direction of becoming single crop countries, with the result that many essential foodstuffs and other agricultural products had to be imported even though these countries enjoyed all the necessary conditions of climate and soil for the cultivation of different crops and the development of cattle breeding. The Soviet Union is helping to diversify the agriculture in a number of countries, and to assist the general development of agriculture. More than 100 different projects are under construction in Algeria, Afghanistan, Burma, Guinea, Iraq, Iran, Yemen, Congo (Brazzaville), Mali, UAR, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia and Ceylon.

These projects include the reclamation of vast areas of land, the cultivation of new crops, the construction of dams and irrigation systems, the establishment of workshops for the repair of agricultural machinery, prospecting and drilling for water, the setting up of experimental stations, and artificial insemination centres. Assistance is also being given in the organisation of state farms, including cattle breeding farms.

In a number of countries elevators are being constructed for the storage of grain, and in others assistance is being given to clear enormous areas of jungle and to bring new areas of land under cultivation.

In the field of transport and communications as well, considerable assistance is being given in the building of more than 50 projects. These include roads, railways, seaports and radio stations.

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## *Skill, Education, Technique*

One of the most difficult and acute problems facing the developing countries is the lack of technical personnel in a whole number of different fields. Now that these countries are striving to overcome the deficiencies in their economy which they have inherited from the colonial system, they find themselves in need of a large number of qualified specialists in the different branches of industry, agriculture, transport, communications and construction. Considerable help in the training of such technical personnel for the countries of Africa and Asia is being provided by the Soviet Union. This help includes the building of some 90 educational and technical establishments, 40 of which are already functioning.

In the main these are quite substantial institutions and will undoubtedly mean a striking difference compared with the situation in the past. In Afghanistan, for example, a polytechnical school is being constructed which will cater for 1,000 students specialising in mining, oil, electricity, transport and engineering. In the same country another technical school is being established which will cater for 700 pupils studying automobile repair.

When one considers that the Republic of Guinea, a country which before independence in 1958 was a very backward French colony, now has a polytechnical institute for 1,500 students built by the Soviet Union and capable of training electrical engineers, mechanics, geologists, agronomists, etc., one can begin to appreciate the significance of this type of technical assistance being given by the Soviet Union. The same can be said as regards the technological institute for 1,000 students which has been built in Burma, the higher technical institute built in Cambodia, the national technical institute being set up in Tunisia, the technical school for 1,000 students which has been built in Ethiopia, etc.

No less than 600 Soviet teachers are at present working at higher and secondary educational systems and technical training centres in the developing countries. In addition to the different forms of economic and technical assistance given directly by the Soviet Union to developing countries, the Soviet Union is also contributing to the United Nations Programme of Technical Assistance, both in the form of financial help and in the provision of Soviet specialists as United Nations experts.

The overall position shows that no less than 30,000 Soviet specialists have been sent to the developing countries to help in one sphere or another. While participating in the construction and operation of the various enterprises, they have also helped to train national personnel directly on the spot. Within the past ten years more than 100,000 skilled workers and foremen have been trained in the developing countries in this way, and a further 20,000 have received industrial and technical training at various Soviet enterprises.

## *What Future for Europe?*

Our colleagues of *Recherches Internationales* who have recently produced special numbers on "The Destiny of the Novel" (No. 50) and on "Problems of Psychology" (No. 51), have, in their most recent issue (No. 52, March-April 1966), turned to the question of "Europe".[4]

As usual they print articles or sections of books selected from the world Marxist press, though in this issue there is an original introductory article by the French Communist Jacques Duclos.

Two sets of problems are examined. The first are problems of European economic development—the economic relationships of the capitalist countries (above all in the Common Market), of the socialist countries, and problems of economic relations between capitalist and socialist Europe.

The second range of problems concerns issues related to European Security—possibilities of disengagement, of disarmament, of a nuclear-free zone in Europe, problems of political co-operation between European countries of different social systems.

An article by the Soviet economist E. Khmelnitskaya discusses "West European Capitalism Yesterday and Today", the Italian Marxist Eugenio Peggio writes on the "Crisis of the Common Market", Fernand Nicolon on "Trends and Contradictions of Integration". There are articles on "Italy in the Common Market", "Trade Unions and the Common Market", on the "Economic Development of the Socialist Countries of Europe" and on "The Council of Mutual Economic Aid".

It is very useful at this time when, once again, attempts are being made to push Britain into the Common Market, to study the views of Soviet, French, Italian and other Marxists on the future of Europe.

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[4] *Recherches Internationales*, Paris, No. 52 *L'Europe*. This can be ordered individually or by subscription from Central Books and Collet's.

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# The Nature of the State

*Ian Brownlie*

*Dr. Ian Brownlie, Fellow of Wadham College, Oxford, is the author of* International Law and the Use of Force by States *(OUP, 1963) and* Principles of Public International Law *(OUP, in the press)*

## Introductory

ANY treatment of the nature of the state in the compass of an article will be to some extent provisional. Only the main theoretical points can be dealt with and some generalisations of a kind which irritate interested specialists are inevitable. In fact the subject matter does not lend itself to dogmatism and neat formulas. It is inherently complex and extensive, reaching into political economy, history and philosophy. It is thus precisely the type of question to which the interrelated social and philosophical disciplines of Marxism can be applied most successfully. Yet the Marxist sources on the state are far from adequate in relation to the importance of the problems, and of those which exist many are concerned with the question of political tactics in a given historical situation.[1] Obviously these sources are important for the theorist, but their emphasis is away from fundamental questions.

While the Marxist may feel that much still needs to be done in the way of basic research he is entitled to pursue the problems in his own way, applying his own methods to the particular subject matter. He is thus concerned with the question of power in societies and more particularly with the relations of social classes. It is of course true that non-Marxists such as the late C. Wright Mills may contribute to the provision of evidence on the question in hand but in the broad field of theory non-Marxists stand self-condemned by the imprecision and superficiality of their justifications for, and descriptions of, state power. In Britain the commonplaces produced by academics about government and power are still based primarily on ideas current in the sixteenth century (cf. Bodin, *De Republica*, 1576) and taken up by Hobbes, Bentham and finally Austin, in his work *The Province of Jurisprudence Determined* (first published in 1832). Hobbes set the fashion for question-begging sermons on the need for order: and Austin provided a dry and analytical construct based on the concept of a political superior whose commands were binding on political inferiors in an "independent political society". Austin's ideas to some extent reflected the historical realities of political life in nineteenth century Europe but they did not go very deep and in any case they obscured the political and subjective assumptions he made as to the composition of the top of his social structure. Needless to say the Reform Bill (which enfranchised five per cent) alarmed him.

Bourgeois ideology from the eighteenth century onwards has produced concepts which have accommodated the idea, if not the essence, of democracy, by a verbal formula which includes a reference to the collective will of the people. Rousseau regarded the state in terms of the visible organs supporting the power of the sovereign as a collective body which rests on the "general will", the consent of the ruled taking the form of a hypothetical "social contract". Hegel's idealism gave rise to a mystical and exalted view of the state as "the actually existing realised moral life", "the Divine Idea" as it exists on earth (cf. the British writer Bosanquet). Modern theorists in the West have commonly regarded the state as a neutral piece of machinery, a specialisation in modern conditions, a part of the division of labour in society (Ehrlich, *Fundamental Principles of the Sociology of Law*, 1912; and Duguit, on whom see Laski, in *Modern Theories of Law*, Oxford, 1933). On this assumption it can be regarded as an arbiter, "reconciling" and "harmonising" various interests in society (Roscoe Pound, Von Spering, Del Vecchio —who calls the state "the harmoniser of dissonances"). These and many contemporary British and American writers base their work on the assumption that the state is concerned with power in society, but they talk of power in abstract terms. They are vague about its source, and, if they do discuss the objectives for which the power is exercised, these are not seen in class terms but in terms of "community interests" and the like. Naturally this is not a complete classification of non-Marxist ideas and many other variants exist.

In contrast both to theories which regard society and the state apart from class struggle and to pluralist and syndicalist ideas, which recognise the existence of classes, but expect the state to hold the ring, to maintain a federation of classes and social groups, Marxism is concerned with the division of societies into antagonistic classes and the exercise of power by economically dominant classes through

[1] Of special note is the study *The British State* by James Harvey and Katherine Hood (1958).

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the state and the law. Marxists strive to reveal the realities of social relations not merely to abstract the truth in the form of theoretical generalisations but to reveal existing injustices, and exploitation by minorities, and thus to provide both the tactical knowledge and the revolutionary and political morale necessary to achieve socialism. Marxist theory of the state is thus a valuable political weapon in the struggle of oppressed classes and nations against exploitation and inhumanity. Whilst the highest significance of the term "state" is related to the exercise of power by the dominant class, Marxists may also use the term in other, specialist and formal, contexts. Thus it may describe an independent subject of international law, a legal person. By political convention it may refer to the political, social and economic complex which is the subject of domination by a given class, i.e. the formal unit of the "nation" which has state power, e.g. the "Italian State". Politically it may also refer to a programme or aspiration for example "the fight for a Kurdish State".

## The State as Part of the Superstructure

Obviously the state is a part of the superstructure and in most societies today it is the most significant part. The concept of state represents a complex interrelation of political and economic power (i.e. control of the means of production, arsenals and the like), of ideas and the will of particular groups of people.[2] It is an organisation with enormous "strategic" reserves both in the control of the economic base and its ability to propagate and reinforce the ideology of acceptance of the state system. In the former case—control of the economic base—*laissez-faire* regimes of the past appear to have no control from the state but in effect the inaction of such governments results in delegation of economic, and therefore political, power to capitalists and landlords,[3] a delegation maintained by the role of the police and army in maintaining "order".[4] In the latter case the power of the state, and indeed its very existence as an idea, as opposed to the *physical* ramifications of government, depends on the fostering of an ideology of acceptance by the subordinate groups by the agencies of religion and the law, which can attach mythical qualities to kingship and the state even in the modern world. The state as a powerful organisation providing its own propaganda of acceptance by the people will do everything possible to make it difficult for exploited classes to see the fact of domination by the ruling class and the objectives of this domination. The state as a part of the superstructure has special qualities in modern conditions (use of radio and the press), including the means to strive for quick adjustment of superstructure to base.

## The State and its Role of Coercion

The predominant aspect of the state for Marxists is the role which it has in maintaining the power of economically dominant social classes. The maintenance of power depends on ideological tactics based on religious instruction and class control of education and the law. But in a situation in which class antagonisms emerge with special sharpness, and the exploited classes achieve discipline, organisation, and a theory of struggle for socialism, the state will rely more and more on coercion in capitalist societies. In these societies the coercive element in government increases and is centralised as compared with the structure of feudalism. A professional army and state police are created and built up. Sections of the working class are blackmailed[5] or bribed into helping the apparatus of coercion. Working class parties linked ideologically with the international Communist movement are rigorously controlled or suitably suppressed, since these parties are recognised as *effective* challenges to capitalist state power.[6] State monopoly capitalism brings the springs of the economy within the control of the state whilst, as we have seen, "free enterprise" effectively delegates power to the owners of industry and protects that power by police and army at state expense.

But the state and the law in intimate relation have more subtle roles to play. Their roles as educators and pacifiers, their aspect as the "standing orders" for toleration and inaction by subordinate groups in the face of class domination are often underestimated.[7] By education and propaganda directed at many generations the myth of national unity as dependent on and embodied in the state is driven home. The king or president is presented as above the struggle, as a neutral rallying point. The civil service is independent of politics, it is said; bankers and industrialists are disinterested economic experts whose strivings coincide happily with the public good. The state is always represented as an impartial force with true function of guardian and national father.

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[2] This raises questions of leadership, group relations and so on which cannot be pursued here.

[3] This procedure and the public law character of private ownership are discussed by Karl Renner, *The Institutions of Private Law and Their Social Functions* (English ed. by O. Kahn-Freund), 1949.

[4] See F. C. Mather, *Public Order in the Age of the Chartists*. Manchester U.P. 1959.

[5] See Mather, op. cit., p. 82.

[6] See Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*, 1957, p. 137, where he says that a political party is an organisation leading to the foundation of a new state in modern historical conditions.

[7] Cf. ibid., pp. 146, 170, 187.

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### Is the State Apparatus a Force in Itself?

Conclusions drawn from historical experience and our knowledge of the role of classes in society make abundantly clear the class character of the state apparatus, which is influenced by the economic base and by other parts of the superstructure, including historical ideas about the state. It is not neutral in the conflict of classes. But this is not to say that it is in every case completely identical with any of the social classes and interest groups, at least in states which have passed into or through the era of capitalism and have a varied class structure. The apparatus—the state executive and its organs, the police and the army—may have their own vested interests. Further, where other political groups are in a state of balance, the state may hold the ring for a short period at least. Engels writes:[8]

> "By way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both. Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers; such was the Bonapartism of the First, and still more of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. The latest performance of this kind . . . is the new German Empire of the Bismarck nation: here capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the impoverished Prussian cabbage junkers!"

Thus is not to fall into the fallacy of pluralism, for the State apparatus in these situations is anything but neutral in the inter-play of class forces: it holds the ring not as neutral arbiter but as skilful tactician with class connections and interests of its own. On occasion one of the other classes may join the "mediator" to form a united front against the worst of all evils: witness the class alliances against workers' parties in parliamentary systems today. In developed capitalist societies the army and the police are often very powerful and provide a handy weapon in political struggles. In times of crisis the attitude of the army and police may be all-important especially where of themselves the democratic forces lack a decisive capacity to gain victory. France (1958-62), Iraq (1958), Burma, Argentina and Indonesia in recent years, Germany (1930-33)[9] provide examples of situations in which the army has played a key role. In these cases the army may have its own interests and not be completely identified with any one class: but even so it decides to exercise its power in a class interest, if only in a negative sense, for example, by ousting governments which are too left in policy. On occasion, as for example in Argentina, the army appears to be the watchdog of a particular class—in this case the middle class.

### The State and Other Groups and Organisations

Whilst acknowledging the great significance of the state in class relations it is necessary to avoid the error of treating it as an abstraction, an isolated entity, with a monopoly of power and influence. Class and other social relations are conducted through a variety of forms and it is obviously possible for other organisations to rival and surpass the state in the sphere of economic and political power. The State apparatus is usually paralleled by and interpenetrates with other organisations: the executive committee of the ruling class may operate indirectly through the state, the government playing the role of steward for the real wielders of power. C. Wright Mills and others have described the relation of corporations to governments in the United States; the Catholic Church was very prominent in pre-war Hungary and Yugoslavia and remains so in Spain and Portugal; feudal interests play a leading role in a state such as Iran. The class struggle is also international and one hardly needs to be reminded of the domination of foreign states and organisations over certain governments. Foreign monopolies may bargain successfully with economically weak states, may dominate economically as in many parts of Latin America and may organise subversion as in Katanga in 1960-63. The use of budgetary control (the U.S. controls 60 per cent of the South Korean budget, for example) and politically regulated aid is very common. Foreign control of a State may be justifiable in certain situations: for example, occupation of an aggressor today involves, or should involve, measures to prevent the recurrence of aggression, and, in particular, the uprooting of the social causes of the aggression. Finally in the present connection, it may be observed that what are in form merely parts of the state apparatus may come to dominate the remainder of the apparatus or the State as a whole. The army leadership plays such a role in some states; in others a cabinet or inner committee or caucus of the ruling party, as a result of specific provision in a constitution or by usurpation.

### The Taking of Power by Exploited Classes

The control and use of the State by exploiting classes is exemplified today by numerous societies in which there are bourgeois dictatorships, including parliamentary regimes, or in which there is a feudal or semi-feudal structure in a modern shell, reinforced

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[8] *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, F.L.P.H., 1954, p. 281. See also Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, F.L.P.H., pp. 20-21.

[9] See Bullock, *Hitler, A Study in Tyranny*.

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perhaps by a small bourgeoisie with foreign support and comfort (Iran, Pakistan, South Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia). Replacement of bourgeois and feudal rule by proletarian power may occur by revolution and civil war, or by political action accompanied by a threat of force against elements seeking to reverse the change of power (cf. the Czechoslovak situation in 1948), or state organs may repress opposition over a period (Hungary 1947-1950).[10]

In discussing the taking of power Marx, Engels and Lenin place great emphasis on the need to smash the old state machine completely. In view of the great influence and the material and ideological resources of the state machine in recent historical conditions this injunction is understandable and remains entirely valid. However, it is worth noticing that experience of the last generation has shown that often circumstances allow the taking of power by creation of a new machine or by changing the direction of an existing apparatus of government. Instances of "smashing" are rare: in fact Cuba provides probably the only good example. There only the courts were left with the old personnel![11] In the case of China the Communists had built up government in their areas over a long period, the achievement of control resulted from a civil war, and of course the Kuomintang moved its functionaries to Taiwan. The German Democratic Republic obviously made a fresh start, deliberately avoiding any continuity with the old government: significantly, Nazi functionaries and judges made their careers in the West. Complete devastation and the absence in the West of rightwing politicians would seem to have created conditions for establishment of a new administration in Poland after 1944. These are cases with special characteristics. There are other instances which show that it is possible to alter the direction of the state machine and achieve socialist aims without the *necessity* of its complete destruction.[12] In fact a socialist government may wish to use all available specialists, including administrators, irrespective of their class background and political antecedents.[13] Nevertheless considerable care must be shown in these situations to avoid allowing too much influence to those bearing ideas from the old superstructure who may be ready to play the role of Trojan horse politically.

[10] See Sobolev, *People's Democracy, A New Form of Political Organisation of Society*, F.L.P.H., 1954.

[11] Blas Roca, Report to the National Congress of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, extracts in *Marxism Today*, June 1961.

[12] Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia probably provide examples of this process, 1946-1949 or thereabouts: Sobolev, op. cit.

[13] There was more continuity between the new and the old in terms of civil service personnel in the Soviet Union than is commonly assumed to be the case.

## The State and the Building of Socialism

Whether the old state machine is smashed or is given a decisively new direction when socialist political power is achieved, it is clear that *in existing historical conditions* the state under socialism will have certain features similar to those of the bourgeois state: in particular it will retain its role of coercion, more especially when the old classes retain political objectives of counter-revolution and sabotage, often with foreign aid.[14] In other words the function of the state is tactical: to maintain political power as the pre-condition for the building of socialism. As corollaries of this it will have the functions of upholding national unity in the period of transition to world communism and of opposing international reaction and the designs of imperialism. The state organisation represents the fact of a socialist territorial base. This tactical role is a pre-condition for the more positive and much more complex task of building socialism and later communism.[15] The state in its role as builder, educator and organiser, is but the ally of other organisations with socialist objectives and is not a super-entity to be set over and against the people and democratic organisations. To reconcile the role of builder with its coercive role is by no means easy; and the positive task of constructing a healthy basis for socialism in *both* the economic sphere *and* in the minds of the people, many of whom may be initially hostile or neutral, is made much more difficult by propositions that of necessity the class struggle *must* intensify in the building of socialism.[16] It may intensify, but this will depend on the concrete conditions of each particular country. Maintaining a strong state apparatus creates two other types of problem for a socialist government. First, the influence of the old superstructure and old administrative habits can persist all too easily, since officials, including convinced communists, may find it difficult to put into practice the business of giving old forms new content.[17] An outstanding instance of

[14] See the highly important passages in Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, F.L.P.H., pp. 25 seq., 142-3; Glezerman and Ukraintsev *World Marxist Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 22; and Angelov, ibid., Vol. 3, No. 8, p. 70.

[15] See Programme of the C.P.S.U., 1961, F.L.P.H., pp. 97-99. In the developed perspective of building a *communist* society after revolution the tactical role of the state in maintaining socialist power will disappear and the state will "wither away". Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, F.L.P.H., 1954, pp. 389, 395, adopts the broader theoretical perspective; Lenin as tactician as well as philosopher is clearer about the precise steps to be taken following proletarian revolution.

[16] For a post-1953 expression of Stalin's thesis on the strengthening of the security organs even after the consolidation of socialist power: Hoxha, *Report on the activities of the Party of Labour*, Tirana, 1961, pp. 158-60.

[17] On the precise changes which would be needed in Britain to transform the state institutions in order to ensure that they serve socialist aims: Andrew Rothstein, *Marxism Today*, June 1959, p. 165.

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the approach needed is the role played by the Chinese communist forces in achieving not simply a military victory against the Kuomintang, but by their bearing, ability to aid peasant communities and character as a people's army, a political victory as well. If this can be done with a formalised and disciplined body like an army it can be done in other parts of the state apparatus. The second type of problem arises from the formal structure of the state with its tendency to centralisation, inherited partly from the old superstructure, partly from its role of coercion and partly from a mistaken feeling that political unity depends on *formal* aspects of organisation. The state under socialism should be the machine, the people and its organisations should be its master. Over-centralisation may give a false unity and create many problems. Verbal solutions and general principles can be provided with great ease: it is practice, and the socialist morality of individuals using state power, which provide successful solutions to such questions as democracy and national identity under socialism. It is hoped that my own verbal prescriptions will have practical value at least to the extent of provoking discussion.

# Contradictions within the Common Market

*François Thoraval*

*(We present here extracts from a Report on "State Monopoly Capitalism and Imperialist Integration" delivered to the International Conference on State Monopoly Capitalism, organised by the French Communist Party at Choisy-le-Roi, May 26th-29th, 1966.*

*The French original of this and the other reports made to the Conference have now been published in a special issue of the Magazine* Economie et Politique.

*The translation of the extracts printed here was arranged by the Economic Committee of the British Communist Party. The Committee has informed the Editor of* Marxism Today *that a number of the Reports are being translated into English and that copies of these will be available from the Committee.)*

TO gauge the progress made towards a Common Market, it is necessary to start from the overall objectives set forth, and in particular the different successive levels of integration between the six imperialist countries which the Common Market was intended to promote.

Numerous analyses have emphasised the contradictory elements which appear in the process of integration at different levels, and, in particular, the contradiction between the relative ease of achieving a Customs Union (with the results it produces), and the obstacles which face, on the other hand, the realisation of an economic union and, still more, the setting up of Community institutions with a supranational role.

This point merits attention, because it shows that the contradiction is not simply a question of the different speeds at which integration can be realised. More than that, the contradiction lies in the fact that progress realised at one level sets up antagonistic tendencies at other levels which raise barriers to the process of unification.

### (a) Customs Union, Economic Union, and Political Integration

It is in the field of the Customs Union that most results have been achieved. Customs duties on goods were cut by 80 per cent from 1957 to January 1st, 1966. Following this, and comparing 1958 and 1965, the share of Common Market trade within the total foreign trade of the 6 countries rose from 29.2 per cent to 41.6 per cent for imports, and from 30.8 per cent to 43.8 per cent for exports.

Over the same period, the comparable figures for France alone were, imports from 21.6 per cent to 38.1 per cent, and exports from 22.6 per cent to 40.9 per cent.

At a certain stage it was thought that the Customs Union would be realised 100 per cent by July 1st, 1967. On the basis of the present state of negotiations between the Six, the Union would be complete by July 1st, 1968—which is earlier than the Treaty of Rome originally envisaged.

It is clear that this development of trade within the Common Market has carried with it an increase

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of certain types of production and a development of the productive forces, especially as regards particular branches of advanced industries, which are the most highly monopolised.

We would like, however, to make some points in this connection.

## Growth Rates

Firstly, as concerns *growth rates*: the supporters of the Common Market like using as an argument the fact that total production in the Community has increased by 38 per cent, as against 28 per cent in the USA and 25 per cent in Britain. They deduce from this that the Common Market has been the essential dynamic force in the economic development of the Six.

But it should be noted that these differences in growth rates existed before the setting up of the Common Market. It was already the case that the Italian, French and West German economies were developing more rapidly than the British and American. At the top end of the scale also, the Japanese growth rate was higher than that of the Six before the Common Market, and it has remained higher.

In the same way, the divergences between the growth rates of the member countries, which were present before the Common Market, still exist. This is notably the case with the faster rates of Italy or West Germany, as compared with France.

One cannot therefore say that the Common Market has been the essential factor in the development of production, even though it has, undeniably, played a role. On the other hand it has contributed to aggravating the already critical position of several industries, notably in France—for example the steel and motor car industries. The Common Market has also resulted in the accentuation of the disparities between economic regions. Finally, in the case of France, it is not unconnected with the slowing down in the rate of economic expansion during these last years.

## Foreign Trade

The second point to be noted follows on from the first, and it has to do with *the precise significance to be attributed to the development of foreign trade*, specifically as concerns the achievement of what is called "integration".

With regard to France it may be observed first of all that the share of foreign trade in the national product is still less than 20 per cent, even though it has indeed considerably increased. This means that the proportion of the national product which is involved in trade relations with the other five countries of the Common Market is, even now, less than 10 per cent.

Furthermore it should be noted that, while trade within the Community has grown considerably since the Common Market came into operation (an increase of 165 per cent between 1958 and 1964), and while this trade has increased more rapidly than trade of the Six with the rest of the world (up by 58 per cent), this same tendency existed prior to 1958.

In five years, from 1953 to 1958, trade between the six future members of the Common Market rose by 75 per cent, while trade between these countries and the rest of the world increased by only 48 per cent.

Thus the Common Market accelerated a tendency which already existed before; it neither created this tendency, nor changed it profoundly. This observation is confirmed by the fact that, for example, Britain's trade with the Common Market continued to grow more rapidly between 1959 and 1964 than its trade with the European Free Trade Association —the respective increases being 70 per cent and 58 per cent.

Two conclusions may be drawn from this. The first is that integration, in the sense simply of a Customs Union, rests on an objective basis which has to do with the economic development of the advanced imperialist countries since the war, and with the structural changes which this development produces in their economies.

The second conclusion is that, at the present stage, one should not over-estimate the impact of integration as such (even at the level simply of a Customs Union) on the economic workings of imperialism. This point is all the more important because, at the level both of economics and politics, the aim set for imperialist integration was something far more advanced than a new form of "Free Trade". The objective was at the same time to create a genuine economic union, parallel to the Customs Union.

This problem is not just formal. One of the obstacles in the way of the accelerated achievement of a Customs Union is that such a Union presupposes simultaneous progress in the harmonisation of economic policies. This is the attitude taken up at Brussels notably by French imperialism, and also, in a sometimes different fashion by some of the other countries, for example Italy.[1]

## Common Economic Policy?

However one can see that great difficulties arise and progress is limited when it is a question of passing beyond a Customs Union to *the drawing up of a common economic policy for the Six*.

There are numerous instances of this. There is no common fiscal policy or social policy, and the

[1] See on this point the report presented by M. de Précigout to the Conseil Economique et Social, Paris, 1965, and the article by Y. Jarry, "Common Market Perspectives" *Economie et Politique*, No. 140, March 1966.

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development of a commercial policy has hardly started.

The most significant case perhaps is that of the *common agricultural policy* to which great importance has been attached for reasons which are essentially political and were advanced in particular by French imperialism. Very many meetings have been held on this subject, but it is only at the cost of great difficulties that a solution has been worked out, since France's partners refuse to turn their backs on their traditional suppliers in order to buy the agricultural products they need from France. They prefer to continue buying from third countries in order, in return, to maintain the export outlets which their monopolies demand. While, after the agreement reached in Brussels on May 11th last, the organisation of a common agricultural market is now in prospect, this agreement will not put an end to the contradictions. Now, as before, for each imperialism the struggle for export markets for industrial products remains *the* essential thing.[2] Furthermore West Germany has made its agreement on the financial arrangements for agriculture conditional on the success of the tariff negotiations between the members of GATT (the "Kennedy round").

But on this point the contradictions notably between French imperialism and German imperialism re-emerge in an aggravated form. German imperialism is in favour of a Common Market which opens up towards the world capitalist market—this for economic and political reasons. As against this French imperialism envisages integration with its five partners only to the extent that this new customs grouping will be sufficiently protected *vis-à-vis* the world market.

The same thing can be seen in relation to the problem of concentration and that of *capitalist interpenetration* and the setting up of monopoly concerns at the European level. In this field the general tendency which appears to exist is not simply to lag behind the process of integration, but to contradict that process.

## Drive to Concentration

The Common Market expresses itself in an acceleration of the drive to concentration. Thus in France, according to a recent study by the C.N.P.F. (French Employers' organisation) the number of mergers and takeovers increased from an annual average of 60 in 1954/61 to 150 in 1961/65. The same thing has happened in the other five countries. In certain of them this development is even more striking than in France, when we take into account the higher level of concentration already achieved, for example in West Germany.

In an unpublished memorandum of January 1966, however, addressed to the Governments of the Six, the Brussels Commission underlined the fact that so far concentration is taking place essentially (not to say exclusively) within the national framework.

At the level of the Common Market itself, the examples of collaboration between industrial groupings of different nationalities remain very few in number and in importance (apart from sales agreements) and apart from the frequently cited case of Agfa-Gevaert, there are more or less no examples of actual mergers. The Brussels Commission stresses in particular the numerous obstacles in the way of the setting up of European companies—legal, fiscal and psychological obstacles.

Consequently it is to be observed that as regards capital structure, the present tendency is not towards the setting up of European units, which would provide a basis for integration at the level of productive relations; the emphasis is rather on national re-groupings. In this connection the present speeding-up of the concentration movement in France is significant.

In analysing the process of integration actually taking place, the trend discussed above is all the more important because, on the other side of the medal, the number of agreements concluded with firms from outside the Common Market, particularly Anglo-American, is considerably larger than the number of agreements between monopolies of different nationality within the Market.

## Political Unification

Turning to the question of *political unification*, and of supra-nationality, even greater difficulties arise.

According to the Treaty of Rome, as from January 1st, 1966, the rule of weighted majority voting was supposed to replace that of unanimity among the Six as regards certain decisions. Following a six-month period of crisis due to the French refusal, however, the last meeting of the Ministers of the Six at Luxembourg was still not able to find a solution to this problem.[3]

In fact, beyond the problem of *institutions*, an extremely important aspect of integration as conceived by the Treaty of Rome is here brought into question. The Luxembourg meeting shows that, for the time being, the aim of arriving at a political union of the Six, through the channel first of a Customs Union and then of an economic union, remains utopian.

[2] See "*Economie et Politique*" No. 126, January 1965. "The Brussels Agreement and agricultural prices in the Six countries", J. Flavien, and "The Brussels Agreement and inter-Imperialist Rivalries", Y. Jarry.

[3] See "Marché commun, crise et perspectives", G. Frischmann, *Economie et Politique*, No. 136, November 1966.

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The French ruling class has thus quite openly brought into question this aspect of the Treaty of Rome. Without saying so explicitly, their partners also in fact recognise that the Treaty no longer fits the situation.

### (b) The Origins and Significance of the New Contradictions

Briefly, new contradictions arise because of the very nature of State Monopoly Capitalist integration.

Firstly, since all the economies involved in the integration process are monopoly-dominated, what takes place is a further strengthening of these monopolies and increased competition between them. Both of these developments involve efforts to keep down costs of production and to increase capital accumulation—that is, to bear down on wages and the level of consumption of the working people. The drive in this direction is re-inforced by state monopoly capitalism. The victims of this policy are not simply the workers but all sections of the population other than the monopoly groups.

In each country the contradiction at the level of *market demand* is accentuated by the activities of the Common Market institutions, and through the effects of integration on the policies pursued by the monopolies and the State alike. One can thus understand why the Common Market has had the effect of carrying this contradiction to a higher level —despite the fact that in certain particular sectors and for a limited time the Market has provided partial solutions to the problem which should not be ignored.

The struggle for markets between the principal monopoly groups of the Six countries finds expression in the sharpening of the contradictions between the Six State Monopoly Capitalist systems.[4]

### Qualitative Changes

Secondly, the productive forces have continued to develop since the signature of the Treaty of Rome. There has even been a speed-up in this direction, and one must take account of the qualitative changes to be observed, and the alterations in the relative importance of different industries.

In 1957 the economic power of the Six countries still rested essentially on the traditional power and steel industries (coal and iron) and on the "classical" metal and engineering industries. For these industries the Six countries taken together provided an area large enough to be viable, in terms both of the development of the productive forces and of the organisation of markets. Furthermore, as concerns these industries, there existed already European groupings which were relatively powerful and capable of independent action *vis-à-vis* other imperialist groupings.

Since then, however, new industries have taken the first place and play the decisive leading role—chemicals (in France and Italy), the electro-chemical industry, electronics, new sources of energy, etc. But so far as these industries are concerned, the scale of the Common Market of the Six is already too narrow. The organisation of the productive forces and of markets needs to be undertaken on a larger scale than this, in some cases on the scale of the whole world capitalist camp. Furthermore the dominant groups in these sectors of the economy are not in the main European, but Anglo-American.

The result is that if they are not to lose their position, the Six countries need to look for agreements in these sectors with concerns outside the Common Market. With the existing relationship of forces, this means most frequently passing under the control of the dominant Anglo-American groups. The most striking example is that of computers. With the recent takeover by the American GEC of Bull in France and Olivetti in Italy, almost the whole European potential in this industry has passed under the control of American imperialism. In a more general way, according to a report presented to the Economic and Social Council (Conseil Economique et Social), the growth of American investments from 1958 to 1964 was by 212 per cent in West Germany, 202 per cent in Italy, 184 per cent in the Netherlands, and 163 per cent in France.[5]

### State Monopoly Capitalism

Thirdly, one must take account of the fact that the Common Market reacts back on State Monopoly Capitalism; the Market sharpens competition and thus accentuates the development of State Monopoly Capitalism. This takes place both at the economic level, through increased activity on behalf of the monopolies, and also at the political level, with growing intervention by the State in the power relationships that exist between the monopoly groups.

Since the scale of operations of the State still remains *national*, this increased economic and political activity by the State works against integration, since it tends to reinforce the capitalist solidarity of each national State Monopoly Capitalism. The only way in which imperialism could guard against this would be to strengthen the authority and the role played by the supra-national institutions. Proposals have indeed been made to do this, such for example as the projected development of a system of supra-national European planning. These

[4] See "Capitalisme monopoliste d'Etat, problèmes actuels et solutions démocratiques", H. Jourdain. *Economie et Politique* No. 136 supplément.

[5] Report by Monsieur Louis Charvet, Economic and Social Council, May 1966.

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ideas, however, still remain in the realm of long-term objectives, and we have seen during the Luxembourg meeting that on this very point there is no likelihood of progress in the short run.

In the absence of an international State Monopoly Capitalist structure, the elimination of tariffs makes economic and political integration more difficult.

In a certain sense, furthermore, a Customs Union comes into contradiction with the setting up of international monopoly groups. In fact it is noticeable that the periods in which the international development of the monopolies is strongest are periods of Protectionism; the setting up of branches abroad, or acquisitions of a stake in companies abroad, are indeed methods of jumping over tariffs.

In this sense, the setting up of the Common Market provokes the Anglo-Americans into new investments in Europe and, on the other hand, leads the European groups to look for agreements with them. As against this, so far as concerns the European groupings of the Six countries, the Common Market makes it less necessary for them to set up branches in each other's countries, or to form common organisations—this apart, of course, from sales agreements which are developing because the opening of the frontiers has made them more necessary. One can see signs of this in the difficulties encountered, for example, by the motor car assembly factories set up by foreign firms in Belgium before the frontiers were opened.

Thus one can see that in the Common Market, contrary to the aims of its promoters, integration takes the form, first of all of an accentuation of the concentration movement within the national framework. These national concentrations, of course, do not do away with the need for international groupings. One may note briefly, however, that in the main such international groupings as are organised are on a scale, and have a geographical area, that goes beyond the Six countries. This two-sided development is an element making for *dis-association* within the Common Market.[6]

The fourth and last point to be noted is the impact of the general economic and political changes that are taking place in the world, on the one side the deepening of the general crisis of capitalism, and on the other, the strengthening of the world socialist system and of the influence of socialist ideas. This is all the more important because State Monopoly Capitalism involves an increasing interference by the political element in the economy.

### (c) The Position of French Imperialism

These contradictions come out particularly clearly in the attitude of the Gaullist government in France —an attitude which reflects very faithfully the positions and aims of French imperialism.

The French government finds itself in a critical position on the question of economic rivalries. Both for its own particular reasons and in terms of the general motives of imperialism, the French government cannot escape from the movement towards the integration of the imperialist economies. While, however, the concentration movement has been rapid in France, particularly during the last fifteen years, the French economy is still backward from a structural point of view. The ratio of the turnover of the principal French monopoly groups to that of their American rivals in each particular sector of industry is on average one in ten. As between France and Germany, the average ratio is one to two.

As a result the dominant groups of French imperialism find themselves in an unfavourable situation *vis-à-vis* their rivals, both as regards markets and in terms of the relationship of forces between monopoly groups. The taking over of the French economy by foreign capital is tending to speed up. The most spectacular examples recently were the takeover of the motor car company Simca by the American Chrysler trust, and the GEC takeover of Bull. It is to be noted that American investment in France has increased greatly since the institution of the Common Market. In France's five partner countries such American investments have been even larger and are increasing even more quickly. This explains the parallel development of contradictions, between France and the United States on the one hand, and France and the other five Common Market countries on the other. It shows also the error committed by those who present the speeding up of integration within the Common Market as a possible reply to increased American pressures.

In face of this situation, French imperialism is seeking to maintain its positions by bringing to bear all the means of action available to State Monopoly Capitalism. It makes use more and more directly of political weapons in order to try to compensate for its relative economic inferiority. It is from this point of view that one needs to appreciate the recent political and diplomatic initiatives of de Gaulle in various fields.

The French government takes into account the

[6] One of the most interesting examples in this connection is that of the fiasco of the proposed European Air Transport Company, "Air-Union". Given the large size of the public shareholdings in the national companies which it was proposed to bring into the one group, this failure illustrates the contradiction between State Monopoly Capitalism and integration. At the same time the role played by the United States indicates the increasing intervention of the State and of political factors in general in questions of international competition between the monopolies. The American Government brought political pressures to bear on the Governments of the Six countries, and it was to the advantage of the American aviation manufacturing monopolies that the Air-Union proposal should not succeed.

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fact that while on the economic front French imperialism is relatively weak, on the political front it holds certain "trump cards".

At the economic level, it is also trying to find support for itself outside the Common Market, and indeed outside the whole imperialist camp, by leaning on the growing economic might of the Socialist countries. This approach at once indicates and accentuates the general crisis. De Gaulle is not opposed to the principle of imperialist European integration. At present he is opposed to his partners in this *firstly* on the question of the pace at which integration should proceed, because here he needs to take into account the relative backwardness of the French monopolies, and *secondly* on the notion of political supra-nationality, because he does not wish to give up the political trump cards held by French imperialism.

For the rest, he supports integration and still more the economic and social implications of integration at home, whether it is a matter of monopoly concentration, downward pressure on the purchasing power of wages, or the elimination of the traditional non-monopoly middle strata.

## Imperialist Integration

Thus we can say that the tendency towards the internationalisation of economic life is an objective phenomenon from which imperialism cannot escape; integration, however, which is the institutional and political form that imperialism has sought to impose on this internationalisation, does not correspond with objective reality.

Imperialist integration is not capable of providing definitive solutions to the contradictions of capitalism. This means that the process of imperialist integration will continue in one form or another, while on the other hand the contradictions themselves will also continue to become sharper.

Whatever the contradictions which set one imperialism against another, integration leads towards the alienation of national independence, the retreat from democracy, and a policy which is against peace. Far from assisting genuine international co-operation and so making it possible to improve the living standards of each people, the real essence of integration on the contrary leads towards increased exploitation of the mass of the people in the interests of the profits of the monopolies.

By the same token, imperialist integration assists in creating new conditions of struggle for the working class and its allies, and in this sense it improves the prospects for challenging imperialism itself. In each country and at the international level, it strengthens the unity of the working class and its leading role in the national struggle to open up a democratic future.

### (d) Possibility of a Democratic Alternative

As regards integration, as in other fields, any real solution to the problem involves a challenge to the domination of the monopolies in each country and to the domination of State Monopoly Capitalism itself.

The solution which best fits the national interest and is most favourable to the cause of peace and progress in the world lies in the coming to power in each country of a democratic regime. This means both the democratisation of the political institutions of the country and of the State apparatus, and the nationalisation of the principal monopolies in the key sectors of the economy.[7]

The question in dispute here is not the development of trade nor the internationalisation of economic life as such—even within the capitalist framework. For an industrially developed country such as France, the national interest will make it necessary for a genuinely democratic regime to work out a broad programme for foreign trade and for international co-operation.

The setting up in the principal sectors of industry of large nationalised concerns, run democratically, would favour the development of international economic relations rather than put obstacles in their way. It would make it possible to provide a new basis and content, a new extension to international co-operation between France and other countries. This concerns first of all trade with the capitalist countries, in Europe in the first instance. It would be necessary and profitable for a democratic France to maintain and even develop further its relations with its nearest neighbours, including imperialist countries, and notably those of the Common Market.

It is for this reason that our Party, while having its own position on these questions, taking into account the view of its principal allies and particularly the Socialists, does not treat the continued presence of France in the Common Market as an obstacle to the working out of a common programme with these allies.

It is for this reason again that our Party demands that the elected national Parliaments, the Trade Unions and the Peasants' organisations, should be represented on a non-discriminatory basis in the institutions that have real powers. If the democratic forces were in power at every level in one of the countries, their presence and activity could contribute to the Common Market, putting an end to the discriminatory rules that it now imposes on trade with third countries, notably the Socialist countries. It could contribute also to the Common Market taking steps to assist the development of

[7] See "Lutte Ouvrière, Marché Commun et Nationalisations", B. Frachon, *Economie et Politique* No. 126, January 1965.

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commercial relations with all states without any discrimination, and to its acting in general in a way which would favour peaceful co-existence and disarmament.

In the same way, as noted in the common statement adopted at the meeting between the delegations of the Italian and French Communist Parties at San Remo, a democratic alternative to the present integration policy, which is tied up with the interests of the monopolies and with the Cold War, should seek to go beyond the limits of the Common Market and lay the basis for a system of economic co-operation founded on national sovereignty, equal rights and the mutual interest of the States of the whole of Europe, capitalist and socialist. This should not stop short of agreements in the field of production and of science.

Here we do not ignore, nor in any way underestimate, the contradictions which will certainly appear between a democratic French State, and neighbouring imperialist States, particularly France's present partners in the Common Market. We take into account also the use which the bourgeoisie at home and abroad will try to make of the machinery and common institutions of the Common Market in the struggle against the democratic forces at the national level. Naturally one cannot prejudge in advance exactly how problems will present themselves in practice, nor how they will have to be solved.

One of the indispensable conditions therefore, for the progress of democracy in France is the refusal to accept supra-nationality and political integration as the most reactionary elements of European imperialism would like to impose them.

We take account of the new conditions which exist at the present stage of history, particularly the change in the relationship of forces at the world level between socialism and imperialism. We take account also of the important political and economic changes which would inevitably follow the creation in France of a genuine democracy. These changes would appear not only at the national level, but also internationally, particularly within the neighbouring imperialist countries who are members of the Common Market. All this could not but affect the attitude of the rulers of these countries.

It should be underlined that a democratic France would need to work out a broad policy for foreign trade and international co-operation. On the other hand, however, the neighbouring imperialist countries of Western Europe would also find it in their own interest not to sever their economic relations with our country. These economic relations are necessary to their monopolies. The present competition between the monopolies in establishing agreements with the Socialist economies demonstrates the importance for them of a large foreign trade.

All this justifies us in considering that the continued presence of France in the Common Market is not incompatible with our democratic perspectives. In this sphere as at the national level, the period of the struggle for democracy cannot be understood other than as a phase of sharp class struggle, nationally and internationally. It is on the outcome of this many-sided struggle that there depends, in the final analysis, the victory of the forces of democracy.

Finally, the achievement of a democratic regime in France will open up great possibilities for trade and co-operation between France and the Socialist countries. Based on the principles of equality and mutual advantage, it will enable France to take advantage to the full of conditions which will be objectively favourable to a genuine policy of international co-operation between the French economy and those of the principal socialist countries, notably in Europe.

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# The Laws of Dialectics

*A Reply to Discussion*

*Maurice Cornforth*

THE discussion which has continued in these pages since November last year (with two brief amnesties in June and September) has raised a number of complications and side-issues which it would be very interesting indeed to follow up—not to mention what I take to be a few red herrings. In reply I shall not try to deal with all or even most of the questions that have been raised. Nor shall I try to answer back one or two remarks which I take to be censorious rather than argumentative. I shall simply try to re-state some of the points which seem to me of key importance for contemporary Marxist discussion on the laws of dialectics. Anyway, a "reply" is only a sort of resting place in a discussion and not a termination of it.

## Testing the Truth of What We Say

The main point is that any statements or generalisations have got to be *tested*. And if they are to be tested we have got to know *how* they can be tested.

The main reason for saying this is that unless we recognise the necessity of subjecting whatever we say to tests, and are willing to subject it to appropriate tests and to alter or modify it in accordance with those tests, we can say whatever we like. The field is then open, not only to dogmas, but to every kind of vague confused and waffly talk. Indeed, the principle of "testability" is the first and most essential principle of a *scientific* approach. And it is by adopting this principle that scientific methods of thinking and investigation have advanced, and overcome obscurantism, superstition and the dictates of arbitrary authorities.

The purpose of my original article, which started up this discussion, was to insist that what we Marxists call "the laws of dialectics" must be subject to tests, and that our formulations of such laws must be worked out and modified in accordance with testing them. It simply will not do to say, as in fact we very often have said, "Marxism says . . .", as though Marxism having said it provided a sufficient warrant for its truth. We have to test what Marxism says; and, as is the case in any department of the search for scientific truth, we have to develop what Marxism is to say in the light of testing and checking its statements.

Following from this, my purpose was to point out that to validate and develop our conceptions of the laws of dialectics we have got to get clear as to exactly *how* they are to be tested. It will not do just to say "They are well tested, practice demonstrates them", and so forth—for that is only another version of the dogmatic "Marxism says . . .". If they *are* well tested, if they *are* demonstrated, we have got to be able to show *how* they are tested, just *what* has demonstrated them.

And this point raises, of course, some rather difficult questions, which are at the heart of all contemporary philosophical discussion in so far as it is in the least concerned with a scientific attitude, namely, questions as to *the nature of tests and the differences between one sort of test and another.*

I must confess that in raising these questions I took it for granted that there *are* laws which are of the nature of "laws of dialectics", that they are scientifically important, and that Marx and Engels have provided us with rough formulations of some of these laws which are worthy of respect. A lot of critics of Marxism deny this altogether. However, my idea was that if we can show how these laws are tested we shall thereby also show that there *are* such laws, that they are scientifically important and, moreover, in just what their importance consists.

In reading the discussion, I thought I could detect on the part of some comrades a reaction of (shall I say?) slight irritation (not to say in at least one contribution considerable indignation) that such questions as these should be raised at all. The laws of materialist dialectics are an integral part of Marxism, and are well enough tested already! So why raise awkward questions which serve only to cast doubt on these laws and, because it is so difficult to answer them, only result in "a host of phrases which swirl with the density of a London smog"?

I think that this discussion, with all its side-issues and digressions, has demonstrated one point very conclusively indeed—and that is that, though we may most of us agree in principle that statements should be tested, we are not at all clear as to how particular statements such as those purporting to express "laws of dialectics" have been or should be tested, and therefore are not at all clear as to what exactly these statements state or how they are to be used.

It therefore seems to me that, so far at least, the discussion is a valuable one, and that we shall have

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to go on working on these problems. Unless we do so we shall not be able to make out at all a convincing case for Marxism in the face of the demands of contemporary scientific thinking.

### Different Laws, Different Tests

In my article I approached the problem of trying to work out how laws of dialectics are tested, and so of showing their conformity with objective reality, by the method of distinguishing between different kinds of laws—where the kind of test appropriate would be determined by the kind of law being tested.

I am afraid that some readers felt like grandmothers being instructed how to suck eggs when I began by pointing out the differences between the sort of laws passed by parliaments and the sort of laws discovered by scientists. I am sorry, for I did not mean to insult their intelligence. My intention was simply to try to make clear, in the most obvious instance I could think of, that there *are* different kinds of law, and that the word "law" is customarily and correctly used in more than one sense. So from that I went on to distinguish other kinds of law, the distinctions between which are equally important though not always so obvious, and in particular laws of natural science, laws of logic, laws of mathematics, and laws of dialectics.

I tried to point out not only respects in which these different sorts of laws are unlike one another, but also respects in which they are like one another. For I think it would be equally misleading to fail to appreciate likenesses as it is to fail to appreciate differences.

In particular, I tried to show that laws of dialectics are *unlike* laws of nature, and *like* laws of mathematics and logic, in respect of their not implying *predictions* as to what will or will not happen in any particular cases. And at the same time I tried to show that they are *like* laws of nature, and *unlike* laws of mathematics and logic, in as much as they nevertheless do purport to *tell us something about how things are*, such as "that things change and are interconnected". This last-mentioned difference is shown, as I said, by the fact that laws of dialectics, like laws of nature, are formulated meaningfully in words, whereas mathematical and logical formulae make use of "formalised symbolism".

Now it seems to me evident that laws of dialectics, which do *not* imply predictions as to what will or will not happen in particular cases, *cannot possibly* be tested in the same sort of way as laws of nature, which *do* make such predictions and are tested precisely by finding whether or not such predictions are realised. It is equally evident that the same applies to laws of logic and mathematics. And finally, it is again equally evident that, however laws of logic, mathematics and dialectics may be tested, there are not only none of them tested *in the same way* as laws of nature, but they are not tested *in the same way* as one another.

So there we have the problem of tests. And it seems to me that, as regards laws of dialectics, this not only places fairly and squarely before us the problem of working out how these laws *are* tested (concerning which, whatever some comrades may like to proclaim, there has always been ambiguity and dubiety), but also indicates the road along which we may hope to answer that problem and, in answering it, to get clearer about just what sort of laws the laws of dialectics are and what is their practical importance.

I tried to indicate the sort of answer which in my opinion may be given. But I would like to stress that in my opinion the most important thing is *to recognise the problem.* On that basis we may hope to correct mistakes in trying to answer it. But if the problem itself is not recognised we shall never answer it, and Marxist theory will remain undeveloped in that respect, with mere slogans and proclamations taking the place of scientific demonstrations.

### Necessity, Possibility and Impossibility

Emile Burns, in his contribution, says he would not dispute much of what I said about the distinctions between different kinds of law. And much of it was, I confess, painfully obvious. In particular, Emile Burns himself stresses what I take to be the most important point, and which was originally stated by Engels, namely: "Laws of dialectics do *not* tell us what to expect in concrete circumstances". So here we have a basis of agreement. What he does dispute, however, and what he thinks even shows "a certain departure from materialism", is what I said about the *sort of test* which is applicable in the case of laws of dialectics. But I do not think it is I who have departed from materialism, but Emile Burns who has departed from the recognition of distinctions which it is necessary to make in order scientifically to *develop* the principles of materialism.

I maintained, and continue to maintain, that it is a peculiarity of logic and mathematics, and also of dialectics, that "it is not possible even to *imagine* anything happening which did not accord with them". This is to stress the characteristic of correctly formulated principles of logic, mathematics and dialectics that they are *necessary*—and consequently that any test of them must be a test of their *necessity*.

As regards logic and mathematics, this is a point that was recognised very early on in the development of scientific thought. Thus, for example, "All A is B" *necessarily* implies "Some A is B". It is

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not the case that we simply find, from repeated experience, that whenever all A is B there is no A to be found which is not B. On the contrary, the above logical principle expresses a *necessary* truth which *cannot possibly be falsified*, the falsification of which *we cannot possibly imagine*.

Of course, such a necessary principle accords with experience. Of course it is (because it must be) in conformity with objective reality. And, of course, logical concepts like the concepts of "all" and "some" are not drawn from the inner resources of our minds independent of experience but are the results of the practice of grouping and classifying things, just as mathematical concepts are the results of counting and measuring. But we do not demonstrate such principles or test them in an *experimental* way, but by a demonstration or test of their absolute *necessity*.

If we overlook this distinguishing character of *necessity*, as applying to some sorts of laws but not to others, then we ignore the findings of several centuries of scientific thought and bring not clarification but complete confusion into our materialist philosophy.

Emile Burns wants us to believe that, before people knew arithmetic, they could "imagine" aggregations of things in which "two plus two" did not equal "four". He then caps this by saying that now we know that the earth is not flat we cannot even imagine that it should be flat. Yet how can one give meaning to saying "The earth is a sphere" if one cannot even imagine its being some other shape? Indeed, one cannot give any meaning to the sentence "The earth is *not* flat" unless one gives meaning to "The earth *is* flat", or in other words can imagine a flat earth.

Such plausibility as Emile Burns' statements possess comes only from ambiguities in the uses of words—in this case, of the word "imagine". This is shown by the conclusion which he draws from his premises, namely, that what we can or cannot "imagine" is "a historical question of the growth of men's knowledge".

Evidently, he is thinking of "imagination", and using the word, as though in a purely psychological context. "What we can imagine" then depends on what sense-impressions we have received, what we have been told, and what we customarily believe. Thus a person blind from birth cannot "imagine" colours. And someone brought up with certain beliefs can easily imagine a flat earth with lots of angels flying around above it before the throne of God, whereas an exceptionally unimaginative student from the polytechnic finds such things extremely difficult to imagine, because they contradict the whole set-up of the world as he has been taught to imagine it.

Similarly, anyone can imagine cases of two lots of two things being brought together and not making four (for instance, if you divide four heaps of sand into two lots of two heaps, and then heap them all together, you will not get four heaps but only one heap). And if he does not know, or rather *does not understand how to use*, arithmetic, he may then claim that two plus two do not always make four.

But all this does not mean that a situation which really contradicts "two plus two equals four" is imaginable, any more than that a flat earth is unimaginable. For when one talks of being able to imagine a flat earth, and not being able to imagine a world out of accord with the principles of logic and mathematics, one is not talking about the *psychological* facility or otherwise with which, owing to one's environment and training, one can imagine or not imagine something, but one is talking about the *possibility* or *impossibility* of constructing a consistent description of a certain state of affairs.

This is not "possibility" or "impossibility" relative to one's particular beliefs and aptitudes—as when someone might say: "I can't possibly formulate a flat earth theory because I know the earth is not flat and that the theory would contradict science". It is *unqualified* possibility or impossibility. And the impossibility of describing any aggregation of things such as to contradict the laws of arithmetic is *absolute*, and not relative to one's knowledge of arithmetic and belief in its laws. In that sense it simply cannot be imagined, whereas a flat earth *can* be imagined.

### Subjective and Objective Tests

It is always very important in any serious discussion to pay very strict attention to distinctions in the uses of words, or all sorts of confusions will result. Thus it often presents a genuine problem in scientific discourse, that the speaker, lecturer or writer must either invent some new-fangled word specially to express what he wishes to convey, or else he must use some already existing familiar word in a sense appropriate to the scientific context. The second course is often chosen. For example, the familiar words "force", "mass" and "energy" are used in mechanics in such a sense. This is generally quite well understood by those using these words, so that they do not get confused, nor argue at cross-purposes, due to interpreting, say, the word "force" when used in the context of mechanics as though it meant the same as when the same word is used in the context of, say, politics.

Precisely this applies to the use of the word "imagine", when one says that a situation contrary to the laws of logic and mathematics is unimagin-

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able, whereas a flat earth is imaginable. Emile Burns simply tries to interpret these more or less self-evident statements as though one were using the word "imagine" in a psychological context.

Necessary principles cannot possibly be falsified, we therefore cannot even imagine their falsification —that is to say, it is impossible to construct a consistent description of a relevant state of affairs in which they do not apply. Hence, as I have said, the test or proof of such principles cannot be the same as that of laws which *can* be falsified, such as the laws formulated by natural sciences. It must be a test or proof of their *necessity*, the *unimaginability* of their falsification or non-application.

Emile Burns immediately objects that such a test is only "subjective", and that to propose it is "a departure from materialism". Why? Because he understands "imaginability" and "unimaginability" in a purely subjective, psychological, relativist way.

If there is a "departure from materialism" here, it is *his*, not mine. At the same time, I cannot see why, when there is some question in dispute in a discussion between materialists, it should always be said that one or the other is guilty of "departure from materialism". I do not think that "materialism" is so rigid an intellectual straitjacket that there is not plenty of room for clearing questions up as between materialists.

That a world out of accord with logic or mathematics is unimaginable is not the consequence simply of our peculiar psychology—as it is a consequence of psychology if one experiences a psychological block in trying to imagine a flat earth. It is because any statement of ours which violates these laws is and must necessarily be out of conformity with objective reality, because what it says is the case is demonstrably and absolutely impossible.

The difference between "subjective" and "objective" tests may be hard to define with full precision, but is clear enough in principle. To apply a subjective test is to apply a test of whether or not something fits some psychological need or capacity of ours, and so is irrelevant to the question of conformity with objective reality outside us. An objective test is so devised as not to depend on peculiarities of the psychological make-up of the tester.

Scientific principles are validated by objective tests. And the problems I raised in my article are problems of the *objective* test of the principles of materialist dialectics.

The special point I made, in bracketing them in this respect with logic and mathematics, was that this must be an objective test of *necessity*—that the laws *necessarily* hold, and not only that experience *does* not falsify them but that it *could* not.

As regards logic and mathematics it is, of course, psychologically quite possible, and it is often done, to propound illogical theories, to make statements violating the laws of logic, and to make numerical statements in defiance of mathematics. When that is done the theories and statements in question do not fit the facts. But the mistake is not the same as that made in saying "The earth is flat", which does not accord with the fact that it is not flat. The point is that such theories and statements *could not possibly* fit the facts, however different the facts might be from what they actually are. My contention is that theories which go against materialist dialectics not only *do* not fit the facts but *could* not. To trace the error in such theories one must look not only for misapprehensions about particular facts, but misapprehensions about universal necessities of the structure and laws of interconnection and development of the objective world.

## The Test of Practice and Conformity With Reality

In his second *Thesis on Feuerbach* Marx said: "The question whether objective reality can be attributed to human thinking is not a question of theory but is a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking".

You can take that as a dogma, or you can take it as a challenging statement, challenging us to find just how in practice to "prove the 'this-sidedness' of our thinking", and to make our thinking, from the most trivial analysis of facts to the most general and universal principles, conform with objective reality.

At the start of our discussion Emile Burns said: "The test, the proof, of any law, whether mathematical or otherwise, is whether or not it produces results that are in conformity with objective reality". I do not think that merely to say "test whether or not it produces results that are in conformity with objective reality" goes very far to meet the challenge which Marx posed. For it is one thing merely to *say* "test", and quite another thing to *do* it.

Presumably one always gets "results" and tests their "conformity with objective reality" in the course of practice. But the way we get and check results from the laws of the natural sciences, and the way *they* conform with objective reality, *is not the same* as with the mathematical sciences. It is not the same either with the social sciences as with the physical sciences. And it is not the same with the laws of dialectics as with those of any of the special sciences.

In what way does *arithmetic*, for example, "conform with objective reality"? Certainly not at all in the same way as, for example, *chemistry* does.

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And how do we "get results" from it? Again, not in the same way.

From two and two, put together in a certain way, we get four. And from hydrogen and oxygen, put together in a certain way, we get water. In the case of hydrogen and oxygen we test that that is so by an experiment—we perform the prescribed experiment and bang! there is some water. But we do not either establish or test "two plus two equals four" by experiment, nor do we get "four" from "two plus two" by any sort of experimental interference with external objects but by an entirely different kind of operation—the arithmetical operation of addition, done with signs or symbols.

And so we *use* the arithmetical formula "2+2=4" in an entirely different way from the chemical formula "$H_2O$". The latter formula, like all laws of natural science, guides expectations by making predictions. It leads us to expect that the chemical analysis of water will always yield two parts of hydrogen to one of oxygen. But anyone who supposes that an arithmetical formula in a similar way guides expectations is making a very crude mistake, and simply *does not know the use* of such formulae.

Thus, as I have already said, "2+2=4" does not predict that bringing together two lots of two heaps of sand will make four heaps of sand. Its relevance would rather be, for example, not to the *number* of the resulting heaps but to the *weight*. But even so, the formula makes no prediction—it does not *predict* that the weight of the final heap will be equal to the addition of the weights of the component heaps. Whether it was equal or not would be ascertained by an experiment. And supposing it were *not* equal? The use of the arithmetical formulae would then come into play, because in that case they would enable us to *calculate* the weight *lost* in the operation, and set us on the path of looking for the causes of the loss: it might be that some grains had been misplaced, or it might (as does not happen with sand, but was found to happen in nuclear reactions) put us on the track of a physical law governing loss of mass in the case of certain sorts of combinations and reactions.

Exactly as I said in my article, the *use* of mathematical formulae is in *calculation*. And it is not the case (as Emile Burns seems to suggest, and to suggest Engels suggested, though of course Engels knew his arithmetic too well to have suggested anything of the sort) that the correctness of the formulae used for calculation is tested by the realisation of the predictions for which the calculations are used. On the contrary, in making predictions from scientific laws, and in making the necessary corrections in the formulations of laws if predictions fail, we *rely absolutely on the correctness of the formulae used for calculation*. That is one reason (it is not the only reason, for they are interested in formulae for their own fascinating sakes) why mathematicians have been to so much trouble to devise the most rigorous methods for the construction and proof of mathematical formulae. Science, to conform with objective reality, must possess the most reliable and well-proven instruments of calculation.

That is the way in which mathematics, like all parts of science, develops as an essential component in the development of human practice, and not divorced from practice. As Marx said, "in practice man must prove the truth, i.e. the reality and power, the 'this-sidedness' of his thinking". And in practice man does so. So far as mathematics is concerned, its "conformity with objective reality" is proved by the fact that, first, its abstract concepts of numbers and quantitative relations are derived from our practical dealings with and efforts to master objective reality, and not invented arbitrarily by the power of the mind alone; and second, that it provides the proven scientific tool for making calculations as required in practice for establishing the correct reflection of objective reality in our thinking, and for a variety of practical techniques.

## Materialist Dialectics as a Scientific Discipline

When it comes to materialist dialectics (and incidentally, I agree with Edward McHugh that "dialectics" must be "materialist", though I cannot see why the necessary truth that dialectics properly worked out is materialist should prohibit one from continuing to use the single word "dialectics") the established and well-recognised fact that dialectical laws do *not* imply any particular predictions in particular cases proves quite conclusively that such laws are *not* testable in the same sort of "empirical" way as are laws of the natural sciences. Of course, "experience verifies them" and they are "very well established in practice"; but it would be completely mistaken to suppose that experience and practice have established, or ever possibly could establish, laws of dialectics *in at all the same way* as laws of natural science are established.

My contention was, and is, that laws of dialectics are *necessary* laws—and that what has to be proved is their *necessity*: not simply that in fact many processes of the objective world go dialectically, but that they *necessarily* go that way, so that dialectics provides *necessary* principles for materialist understanding of the real world.

This is why, for the working out of materialist dialectics, it is not and cannot be sufficient merely to produce *examples* of dialectical processes. (Incidentally, this is not an original idea of mine, and not a "revisionist" interpolation, for it comes from

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Lenin's *Philosophical Notebooks*.) This is not to say that examples are not needed. They are needed, and they need to be studied, for two reasons. First, we get to *understand the significance and application* of dialectics through examples (just as one learns other disciplines through examples). Second, a part of the way we *test* the formulations of dialectical laws is through examples—for the study of examples is indeed a method of testing that the laws as formulated do apply, in other words, a method of ensuring that in working out dialectics we "keep our feet on the ground".

But as regards the *necessity* of materialist dialectics, which is what is to be proved, the test is, as I said in my article, "the test suggested by asking the question: 'How could it *not* apply?' ". I then tried to show (and will not repeat it here since the discussion has brought out nothing to contradict this general point) that the recognised formulations of laws of materialist dialectics *are* susceptible to this test. It is by this means that we can hope to prove the *necessity* of materialist dialectics, *both* as "a law of thought" *and* as a law objectively realised in nature and human society.

I would like to add three supplementary points of explanation, arising from the discussion.

First, I said at the end of my article that "the study of dialectics is concerned with the most general categories with which all scientific thinking must operate—the categories of motion, connection, quantity, quality, polar opposition, and so on"; and that in this way, as Engels said, materialist dialectics should be "developed as the science of interconnections".

In the discussion Mike Steadman pointed out that the so-called "principle of causality" would also qualify as a "category principle". That is so indeed; and in my opinion, therefore, the working out of the meaning and implications of "the principle of causality" is a part—and an essential part—of the discipline of *materialist dialectics*, "developed as the science of interconnections". Causality is one of the categories of materialist dialectics.

But Mike Steadman's point immediately raises the question (besides other questions which he raised about definitions) of what exactly *is* "the principle of causality". What does it say? What does it imply? He does not answer this question—for which I do not blame him, for not only am I too unable to answer it, but I know of no treatise where it has been satisfactorily answered. The fact is that we can often make good use of the word "cause" in particular contexts, but we possess no demonstrably correct formulation of the general "principle of causality". Yet although he does not know, and consequently cannot say, exactly what "the principle of causality" is or says, Mike Steadman proceeds to suggest that it is, or may be, "falsifiable" (like the law of conservation of energy, which he says is "a category principle", and which I say is not).

On this I would like to comment that we should try to formulate "the principle of causality" as a *necessary* principle, so as to be sure *both* that the principle as we formulate it is a necessary "law of thought" *and* that it correctly reflects objective reality. That this has not been done does not mean that we should not try to do it, nor that we could never succeed. In my view, if "the principle of causality" is formulated in such terms that it is evidently falsifiable, that is a sign that it is *not* correctly formulated. The inadequacy and incorrectness of certain formulations of "the principle of causality", like for example, the traditional ones which imply what is called "strict determinism", is proved by the fact that good scientific theories can be formulated which do not employ the principle as formulated but contradict it.

Now this seems to me to show that the demand for "proof of necessity" in the formulations of materialist dialectics is a creative and constructive demand. The point about it is that it is a method of *developing* our materialist principles by testing the correctness and completeness of their formulations in such a way as to go on to improve and extend them.

This leads me to a second point, the one which John Lewis made when he said that "I am not at all sure that the laws (of dialectics) as we formulate them are exhaustive or even the most important". I would go further than that (as I think John Lewis would too, despite the cautious words he used), and say that I am sure that "the laws as we formulate them" are *not* exhaustive. And I would be inclined to go even further, and say that an *exhaustive* formulation of such laws could *never* be accomplished (any more than a similar feat could be performed in mathematics).

I think that one of the great gains which would ensue from taking more seriously, and going more exhaustively into, the question of the basis and *test* of materialist dialectics, is that we would thereby rid ourselves of narrow dogmatic formulations, which mislead honest workers by telling them "Here are three (or possibly four) laws, and if you learn them by heart and apply them you have all the wisdom the proletariat needs"; and that we would then understand that dialectics is concerned not only with "change" and "interaction" and "quantity" and "quality" and "contradiction", but with necessity and accident, form and content, thing and process, substance, causality and, indeed, the entire range of categories we employ in getting

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to know and to master the real world, a range which is limitless, inexhaustible.

As for the "finality and precision" of formulation which John Lewis also queried, I think that we can hope to achieve sufficient precision for our purposes at given stages of the development of knowledge on given topics, but that there can be no such thing as finality.

## Use and Applicability of Materialist Dialectics

Lastly, what about the use and applicability of materialist dialectics?

Peter Simple said in the discussion that we are "confused" if we regard the principles of materialist dialectics "as necessary for all valid thought in the world of science". For "if so they are indispensable"—and yet natural sciences make great progress without scientists being explicitly aware of these laws. The real confusion here is in the contribution of Peter Simple, and it is just like saying that the laws of locomotion cannot be necessary for successful walking because so many people walk without having studied the laws of locomotion.

Marx and Engels began to study the laws of dialectics as they are exemplified in the methods and discoveries of the sciences (and far from their never having said anything about "the dialectics of nature", they said that the same dialectical laws as are exemplified in the processes of nature must be exemplified in those of society). The purpose of this study was, and is, to *abstract* and formulate *these general and necessary laws.*

And what is the use of that supposed to be? It is certainly not that by formulating abstract principles of materialist dialectics we produce formulae for making discoveries which could not have been made otherwise. Materialist dialectics does not add any new ingredient to standard scientific method, but the formulation of its principles is a formulation of principles already implicit in that method and already applied whenever and wherever that method is successfully applied. The point is simply that at certain stages of development it becomes useful and, indeed, indispensable to turn attention from the practice to the principles—to *reflect on what we are doing*, to *study the necessary principles of it*, because of difficulties, confusions and errors that have arisen in doing it.

As Engels said in his time, all sorts of difficulties and contradictions were arising in the theory of physics, just because of pre-conceived idealist and "metaphysical" notions which were in contradiction with the necessarily dialectical character of the objective physical processes. This is still true. But especially valuable and important was the abstract study of materialist dialectics in relation to the sciences of *society*—for Marx and Engels were able to expose the traditional *anti-scientific* conceptions (rooted in the prejudices of exploiting classes) which prevent the development of a genuine science of society, or of scientific socialism.

Peter Simple tells us (but the italics are mine): "For Marx, when you study a particular situation and frame certain ideas about it which determine your actions, the actions create a new situation in which the former ideas no longer hold and you have to frame new ones. This *and only this* is what dialectics means for Marx."

But surely the practice of socialism does not lead us continually to conclude that our theory of scientific socialism does not hold and that we must invent a new theory—though it does, of course, lead to the enriching and correction of the theory. What dialectics meant for Marx, and ought to mean for us, is not hopping from one idea to another, but is the working out and validation of the general principles for framing ideas in conformity with objective reality to guide our practice.

The revolutionary socialist movement is a movement not merely to remedy particular grievances but to reshape the whole world, to reshape human society and by doing so to complete so far as we can man's mastery of nature. For this we need the fullest grasp, the fullest mastery, of all the principles of scientific thinking. And we cannot proceed with a few adages such as "adapt new ideas to new situations", or "test whether it produces results in conformity with objective reality", but must study *how* to test and retest, to work out on a sure foundation and make more precise, the necessary principles of valid thought and effective action.

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**Discussion Contributions on:**

# The Dialogue between Christianity and Marxism

*William Barton*

(*William Barton is General Secretary of the Friends Service Council, London, a Committee which is concerned with Quaker work abroad. Earlier this year William Barton gave the Swarthmore Lecture on "The Moral Challenge of Communism: Some Ethical Aspects of Marxist-Leninist Society".* The text of this article reflects William Barton's personal views and is not an official statement on behalf of the Society of Friends.*)

I BELIEVE the Marxist and the Christian need each other in the dialogue. This kind of encounter is essential for both if they are to understand their own beliefs and the practical relevance of these beliefs to the individual and to society. On the Continent there is more evidence of organised Marxist-Christian discussion than in Britain. I suggest that Marxists and Christians should give higher priority to the time and energy they devote to the dialogue. There is a favourable climate of opinion for fresh initiatives in encounter. Marxists and Christians who perceive the potential significance of the dialogue should not only themselves promote joint discussion but also interpret the dialogue to others within and without their own ranks.

## Planes of Encounter

One of the favourable signs for the dialogue is the recognition by both Christians and Marxists that an oversimplified, static view of the "other side" does not correspond with reality. An unsympathetic or cynical approach could exploit the differences within the Marxist and Christian worlds and widen ideological divisions. On the other hand, an acceptance and positive use of the diversity within both the Christian and Marxist traditions could enrich and deepen the dialogue. A willingness to explore this diversity would reveal uncomfortable differences. But it would also lead to points of mutual contact and understanding. A thorough examination of the wide spectrum of Christian outlook and practice would reveal much that was in sympathy with the profound social conscience of Marxism. Similarly, the Christian is ill-equipped for the dialogue unless he takes into account the various facets of Marxist-Leninist thought and society developing in different parts of the world. In particular, European Christians may give insufficient weight to the impact and relevance of Marxism-Leninism in more distant areas, such as Soviet Asia and China.

One of the important planes of encounter in the dialogue is ideological discussion. Here profound philosophical issues will be involved—questions about the nature and destiny of man and about the right ordering of society. It would, however, be regrettable if theoretical debate contributed an excessive ingredient to the substance of the dialogue. An examination of Marxist and Christian practice would inject a healthy realism into the exercise and would lessen the danger of that arid inflexibility which keeps discussion partners locked in an ideological cul-de-sac. Moreover, a balanced inclusion of practical issues in the dialogue would facilitate a wider range of participation and interest. Inevitably, the dialogue begins on a modest scale with pioneering groups from each side. But it is essential that the first small ripples of discussion should carry the momentum of widening circles of influence. Otherwise the dialogue will remain a rarified exercise for certain of the élite. The patience we need for the slow, initial steps should not weaken our resolve to share the fruits of the exercise as broadly as possible and draw others into a sense of involvement.

## Ethical Issues

Marxism and Christianity touch each other at so many points that participants in the dialogue may find themselves overwhelmed in a mass of ill-defined material. A selective approach to subject matter may help to avoid such floundering. I suggest that one useful approach might be to concentrate on some ethical issues in which Marxists and Christians have a common interest. Such issues should not, of

* (Friends Home Service Committee, 6s.)

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course, be treated in complete isolation from economic and political factors. There is, however, a danger that the non-Communist world concentrates so heavily on political and economic analysis of Marxist-Leninist society that it gives insufficient attention to moral questions. Christians following the dialogue should not only recall the strong ethical content in Marx's attack on capitalism and in his vision of the ideal society. They should note that within the "Communist" countries one can perceive indications which might justifiably encourage an interest in ethical trends. As examples one might quote the emphasis in the Soviet Union on the "New Man" and the "Moral Code of the Builders of Communism", as well as important ethical elements of Chinese Communist teaching including the qualities of character advocated in such contemporary patterns of morality for young people as Lei Feng and Wang Chieh.

Remembering the moral dilemmas of affluent society in the West and speculating on how much they may be shared as affluence spreads to Marxist-Leninist countries, we might explore the motivation of economic and social life in terms of moral assessment. Thus in choosing themes for the dialogue we could select from a whole range of related topics like the following: What have Marxism and Christianity to learn from each other about the ethical dangers of the acquisitive society? Are competition and the profit motive essential and can they be justified on moral grounds? What is our duty (both personal and in terms of social organisation) to the hungry, poor and under-privileged within and without our own groups and national societies? How do we promote a purposeful sense of belonging to a community? How can class and work barriers be overcome? What are the best ways of assuring to women their rightful place in social organisation? What is the ethical role of public entertainment, leisure and advertising? What is our moral duty in the reform and rehabilitation of prisoners? There are many other important moral problems relevant to the dialogue. In this context we might, for example, go on to explore queries such as these: How far is the purpose and destiny of the individual man adequately expressed in terms of the good society? Are free activity and expression of opinion by minorities essential to a healthy social order? What moral priority do we give to the unfettered exchange of ideas and opinion? Do hatred and intolerance have a positive role in the community? What are the moral limits on the use of power to achieve political and social ends?

## Atmosphere of the Dialogue

Much depends on the atmosphere of the dialogue. The exercise will be superficial unless there is frank and open comment. We should not skim over differences, and critical analysis must have its place. But the dialogue becomes sterile if envisaged as a contest in which one side concentrates on attacking, crushing or exploiting the other. The search for common ground is helped by a readiness to listen and learn, an openness to new truth. It is not enough to display a reluctant patience with the assessments we make of each other's positions. Let us recognise that such assessments can provide a creative if, at times, painful contribution. They do more than add to the common pool of knowledge and understanding in the dialogue. If conducted sympathetically, these attempts at assessment can bring fresh light and stimulus to both observer and observed. Respect for the partner in the dialogue is important and also willingness to perceive positive aspects in him as a person and in his ideas. The exchange of comments through written contributions can make a major contribution to the dialogue. However, the kind of atmosphere described here is best achieved in personal encounter. Much helpful encounter in this field should take place outside the framework of a pre-arranged dialogue. This is, of course, no argument against Marxists and Christians arranging carefully planned initiatives.

## Working Together

Yet the dialogue is much more than a matter of careful organisation. Those coming to it bring with them the fruit of their own and others' experience, research and meditation. In spite of much study already accomplished and in progress, the gaps in mutual knowledge are likely to be among the most formidable handicaps in these encounters. From the Christian side, for example, I would like to see much greater attention to the study of such themes as the "New Man" in Marxist-Leninist society. It would help an informed participation in the dialogue if church training and study centres gave more prominence in their curricula to Marxism-Leninism. Such institutions could directly contribute to the Marxist-Leninist encounter by inviting a Marxist speaker to introduce discussions. One would hope that Marxists might feel able to issue reciprocal invitations. We cannot expect swift or consistent progress here, especially if the encounter is envisaged from an international perspective. Practical and emotional inhibitions are involved and widely varying conditions in different countries must be taken into account.

It is natural to think of the dialogue as a purely verbal encounter. Discussion is, indeed, an important part of the exercise, but it need not be the only level of communication. Those experienced in attempts at practical partnership between Communists and

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non-Communists are well aware of the problem of maintaining the right blend of co-operation, goodwill and mutual respect for independence. Working together has its special pitfalls in the political field, although these pitfalls do not mean that we should *a priori* dismiss the possibility of such co-operation. Perhaps a specially valuable contribution to the dialogue can be made when Marxists and Christians join in some task involving manual labour for the benefit of the community. A sense of co-operative involvement in the "work camp" type of assignment can help create the right atmosphere for the dialogue. The kind of work-study project which includes participants from Eastern Europe, and in which Quakers have taken a lively interest, should provide useful experience and stimulus for further initiatives in this type of communication.

We can only respond creatively to the tensions of the dialogue if we face realistically the frustrations and thorns of ideological encounter. We must reckon not only with encouraging bridges but also with daunting gulfs. In patience and humility we need to acknowledge that ignorance and unimaginative rigidity are not confined to any particular group. But the time seems propitious for bold initiatives as we reach out to our partners in the dialogue. Loyal to the best in ourselves, may we also seek and enrich the best in each other.

# No Room for Homo sapiens?

*A. Chater*

IVOR MONTAGU'S article "No Room for Homo sapiens" in the June *Marxism Today*, raises many questions which need studying on the basis of scientific analyses of concrete situations, and especially interesting, if not so urgent for most of the world, are those which deal with the long-term relationship between population size and quality of life. However, I know of no evidence to suggest that there are or are likely to be any problems which can be categorised as the *inescapable* results of population growth. When such problems *appear* to exist, the real cause is found to be failure to carry out the necessary social and political changes to deal with population growth.

### Feeding the World's Population

In my article in *Comment* (April 16th), I dealt with *the* most urgent problem, next to preventing nuclear war, which faces the population of the world today, namely food supply. This problem would remain, incidentally, even if birth control measures were so effective that population growth were arrested altogether. That is why it is right and proper to place the emphasis on the political and technical measures required to raise the supply of food. But the manner of Ivor Montagu's reaction to what I wrote would suggest that either he misunderstood it completely or else he only glanced at it with the preconceived intention of bashing what he calls "dogmatic Marxists", "nervous Marxists" and "lack of confidence Marxists", whoever they may be in this field of work.

Apparently Ivor Montagu's "Tony Chater" simply pooh-poohs the danger of population outstripping food supply in the short term (as if it has not already done so!) and contents himself with the beautiful dream (true of course!) that *in the end* all will be well "if the revolution comes". Rather than face today's problems, "he" hides behind the long-term prospects and puts "his" faith in world socialism. Maybe such people do exist, just as there are those who are so overawed that they are stricken by paralysis and see no hope at all. But Ivor's "Tony Chater" is an imposter. Contrary to the views attributed to "him", I sought to establish in my article three basic propositions:

(1) That the question of feeding the world's growing population is an urgent one, leaving very little time for its solution before it gets completely out of hand,

(2) that the technical means are available *now* for feeding the population we are likely to have in the year 2,000 at present rates of growth (involving more intensive cultivation of existing agricultural land through irrigation, drainage, mechanisation and chemisation; plus extension of the cultivated area, since it is estimated that with present techniques this could actually be doubled): and that even after that, present scientific progress permits us to glimpse possible advances in the future, involving cultivation of the deserts, the rain forests and the sea, use of waste products, breeding of improved varieties of plants

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capable of replacing meat, microbiological and chemical food production, which would provide an adequate diet for many millions more,

(3) but that the application of existing scientific knowledge to the immediate problem of feeding today's population, let alone that of the next decade, only becomes possible to the extent that progressive opinion succeeds in its struggle to cut arms expenditure, and imperialist robbery, and reorganise the social relations of production in the underdeveloped countries so that the peasants can be liberated as a prelude to gathering them together in large-scale state and co-operative farms, and so that the necessary industrialisation can take place. (Naturally each step forward in this struggle helps the fight against hunger—it is not necessary to await complete victory.)

## Is This Academic?

One may ask, what is the use of showing that it is technically feasible to feed a population many times that which is filling many people today with fear and panic? Is this not academic, worthy only of scholastics, fiddling whilst Rome burns? The need arises from the fact that the view is widespread that at a certain point there comes into operation a fundamental obstacle to achieving a balance between a growing population and its food supply. Hence the emphasis on birth control. Naturally this view is close to the hearts of the spokesmen for imperialism, becauses it changes the discussion into an argument about technical possibilities instead of about the political issues surrounding the use of those techniques for raising food production which already exist. Many well-meaning, sincere and humane people are affected by this view, and to that extent there is lack of clarity and understanding of the political changes needed to wipe out hunger and poverty. To that extent the fight against hunger today is diverted away from its real target.

Indeed the fiddling whilst Rome burns is really being done by those who are searching for solutions to the problem of hunger outside the context of the struggle against war and imperialism (see Idris Cox's article, July *Marxism Today*). Ivor Montagu seems to dismiss my propositions by the irrelevant assertion that world socialism is "not on today's agenda". Presumably he means by this that world socialism is not likely to be a fact within the next decade or so, and therefore we cannot avail ourselves of its undoubted advantages in dealing with the problem of hunger. But that is not the point. What *is* on today's agenda and *is* very relevant to the problem of hunger is the slow, uneven, halting, highly complex transition on a world scale from capitalism to socialism, with at its very heart the broad mass movement to end war and defeat imperialism.

I hope it will be understood that I am not equating here the struggle for peace, the struggle against imperialism and the struggle for socialism, although *objectively*, whether the people involved appreciate it or not, they are all connected intimately with one another. For example, the more imperialist intrigue is countered, the greater the possibility that the balance will tip in favour of the all-round non-capitalist economic development of the underdeveloped nations, leading on in time to socialism. And in the developed countries, the more the people succeed in imposing a policy of peace and the more they succeed in combating imperialism, forcing their Governments to extend genuine economic aid to the underdeveloped countries, the nearer they move towards controlling and taking over the giant monopolies—an essential step on the road to socialism. It is in this way that the struggles for peace, for ending imperialism and for socialism are interwoven, but it would be sectarian and muddled thinking to equate them one to another.

## What Sort of Revolution?

If I am guilty of saying that the problem of hunger will be solved "when the revolution comes", let us be clear what "revolution" I am talking about. I quote from Lord Boyd Orr's contribution to the book *Our Crowded Planet* (1963). After referring to the increase in food production required in the next forty years or so, he asks:

> "Could that amount of food be produced? On that there are different views. My own is that with modern engineering and agricultural science, it is physically possible to increase the food supply more than eight times. But that could be done only under two conditions. The first is that all governments would be willing to co-operate on a world scale for its increase and equitable distribution. The second is that all governments would contribute in proportion to their resources, estimated by the amount of money devoted to military budgets, to an international fund to provide for the vast amount of industrial goods needed mainly by the underdeveloped countries for the rapid increase of their food production. It would take at least 12,000 million dollars a year to provide sufficient food for all people within about ten years. That is about 10 per cent of what the world is spending on military budgets."

Here the fight for disarmament is stated explicitly as a component part of the fight against hunger. But also implied in his two conditions is the abandonment by the Western Powers of their imperialist policies. Boyd Orr is referring in fact to the World Food Plan he pioneered as Director General of FAO. This was shot to pieces before it got off the ground by the USA and Britain precisely because,

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(1) it would have helped to stabilise prices for primary producers,

(2) it would have strengthened the bargaining position of the underdeveloped countries when they were in the market for industrial goods,

(3) it would have helped them to industrialise,

(4) it would have provided loans free of interest and repayment of capital until abject poverty had been abolished.

In short, it was sabotaged because it would have made the underdeveloped countries economically more independent, threatening to free them from the grip of imperialist domination.

What, then, is the character of the "revolution" I am talking about? It is essentially a progressive struggle against the giant industrial and trading monopolies and the rich financiers. It involves imposing disarmament upon them. It involves forcing them to grant full political and economic independence to the underdeveloped nations. It entails pressing home the twin demands:

(1) more equitable prices on the world market, so that the underdeveloped can earn enough to finance industrialisation and increased food production,

(2) outright grants and interest-free loans to enable them to overcome the bottlenecks in their economic growth quickly.

## Birth Control

To the extent that this "revolution" progresses, to that extent is it possible to deal with the problem of balancing population and food supply, but the first is the pre-condition of the second. Is this Utopian? On the contrary, the struggle for the demands I refer to is at the head of the political agenda of the world today. It has already *been* the "agenda" at one Conference held by the UN on Trade, Aid and Development. It will again be the "agenda" at the second Conference *next year*. In fact it is Utopian to imagine that the problem can be dealt with in any other way. We have to face it. Failure to achieve significant cuts in armaments within the next few years, failure at the same time to combat imperialism effectively, *perhaps* this might mean nuclear war, but *certainly* it would mean continuing and increasing starvation for many millions more.

What then of birth control? Ivor Montagu is pushing at an open door if he is saying that attempts must be made in the next 34 years to control population growth. No-one is maintaining that population cannot grow faster than food supply. The logic of my case is that this is precisely what will happen unless significant advances are made in the struggle against imperialism and war. But it is wrong to present birth control as the answer, or even to give more weight to it than to the need to boost food production. Birth control will certainly be necessary, but it can only help to overcome poverty and hunger within the framework of determined efforts to raise food production quickly. It will be up to each individual country to decide upon the balance it deems reasonable between measures to control population growth and measures to promote the food supply. But in all cases the emphasis will have to be on increasing the food supply. No-one says that this is an easy task from the technical point of view, even though we have the necessary knowledge. We know the experience of Russia and China, we know the difficulties, but we are also conscious of the tremendous achievements. No-one denies that technical developments, even under ideal conditions, take time to bear fruit. That is a fact of life. And of course, no-one is going to appeal for maximum reproduction in this period just because Marx showed that wealth is enlarged by the labour of human beings. Quite the contrary. But if raising food supply is not an easy task, neither is the introduction of birth control. As Masood Ali Khan says in his article "Who is responsible for hunger in India?", *World Marxist Review*, April 1966:

> "Western and bourgeois propaganda tries to concentrate all attention on rapidity of population growth and not on slowness of increase in production and the extremely low yield of crops in India. Measures of birth control and family planning propagated in the country do not affect the illiterate and the poor. Experience shows that only where illiteracy and cultural backwardness have been removed can population growth be checked. And economic progress is the basis for cultural progress. So hoping for a reduction in population growth to ease the problem is really putting the cart before the horse."

Please note that I am not maintaining that population growth slows down automatically with economic progress. What I am stressing is that, religious difficulties apart (and they are formidable), any major birth control campaign in the underdeveloped countries will encounter terrific obstacles unless prior and concurrent economic measures are already leading to significant improvements in the living standards of the people.

## Long-Term Questions

I would like to come now to some of the long-term questions which Ivor Montagu raises although space prevents me from expanding at length. In the long term, food supply will cease to be a problem. Ivor Montagu quotes Kolganov maintaining that today 7.4 acres are needed to support one person. This will be reduced gradually by improvements in

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traditional agricultural techniques, and cut drastically to the extent that microbiological and chemical food production techniques are introduced. The latter could permit the release of large tracts of former agricultural land for habitation, sport, etc., etc. Maybe *we* would not relish the products of these new industries, but this is really a question of deeply ingrained habit and of new culinary methods, and in any case they would probably be used alongside traditional foods, at least at first. The real point I am making is that if future generations so desired, they would have the means of putting off the problem of sheer overcrowding, of space, without recourse to draconian birth control measures, even if the colonisation of other planets were not technically feasible at that stage. Bearing that in mind, and considering the present rate of scientific advance, is it so fantastic to foresee that the problem of space on Earth would be solved by the colonisation of planets rather than by strict birth control? Of course, future generations may decide to stop population growth altogether, or cut it drastically, by a programme of birth control accepted by consent within the sort of self-reliant society which will then exist. This would be an alternative to becoming accustomed to the products of microbiology and chemistry or to the effort to conquer space. A combination of measures would seem to me the most sensible. But that is not *our* problem. Our problem is raising the traditional food supply during the next 30 to 50 years. Unless that is done, future generations may never have the chance to make their decisions.

To the extent that the food supply problem is solved in any part of the world, the other population problems touched upon by Ivor Montagu force their way to the top of the list. How to provide the goods, social services, cultural and sporting facilities, all the things needed for a decent, happy life in a well-integrated society. In fact, these are the problems we have today in Britain (although the latest National Food Survey would suggest that we are not out of the wood even with the food supply and distribution). But these problems are caused less by population itself than by lack of the appropriate social and political measures to deal with them before they became so acute. They are no more the inescapable results of population growth than is hunger. In all cases, it is a question of discovering the right technological, social and political measures needed to restore or maintain the proper balance.

But should we take the trouble? Do we really need every hand and every brain to build the new, genuinely human, civilisation which science makes possible? I consider that we do, even with automation, on condition that we always plan to maintain a proper balance between the number of individuals and the supply of goods and services, in the broadest sense, required to guarantee each and all a happy, prosperous existence. The Universe is so vast and science is accelerating at such a pace. There will always be so much to discover and turn to Man's advantage. Automation cannot do this. Automation frees Man from the humdrum routine of day to day production; it does not replace Him (except, should we add, if the capitalists get their way).

## *Peter Latham*

IVOR MONTAGU'S "contribution towards opening a discussion on the problem of population movement" (*Marxism Today*, June 1966), is refreshing as well as a long overdue theme for reappraisal by (British) Marxists. His censure of the apriorism of much Marxian demography asking: "Is it for any better reason than the subjective psychological one that, since they are on the side of the masses, to carp at numbers seems a sort of infidelity" he shows is realised in the Soviet Union where they "no longer disregard the works issued on population in the capitalist countries" (Pokrishevsky). However, although I accept Montagu's general thesis that Western Marxists have neglected the implications of a doubling of world population in one generation contenting themselves with the panacea of socialism to establish a "normal" population distribution, his discussion of the birth rate, in particular, it will be suggested in what follows, detracts from his challenging re-formulation of the "population problem". This contribution is an attempt at synthesis—on the one hand a plea not to throw the "baby out with the bath water" (how can Montagu seriously discuss the birth rate without mentioning demand-for-labour analysis?) and on the other hand, concrete analysis of Western fertility patterns, with reference to non-Marxist Studies.

### Why the Birth Rate Changes

Montagu suggests (having noted the phenomena in recent years in the industrialised countries for birth rates to rise) that "not industrialisation and urbanisation of themselves but their increase in the standard of living may well be responsible for decrease in birth rates". Yet the existence, generally

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speaking, of an inverse relation between standard of living and fertility, does not necessarily mean that standard of living is the causal mechanism determining fertility patterns. On the contrary, the association between low fertility and high standards of living may be considered as having no direct relation, that is, both phenomena may be common products of something else. Thus, differences in standard of living may reflect differences in the mode of obtaining a livelihood among the classes. Moreover, if it can be established that these differences are significant in determining fertility patterns, then this is an explanation that does not imply that standard of living is the significant factor determining fertility differentials.

The secular decline in the birth rate since the last quarter of the 19th Century, a feature of all the advanced capitalist countries, has been variously explained in terms of economic and non-economic factors. Twenty-eight years ago, Radhakamal Murkerjee in his *The Political Economy of Growth* illustrated the inter-war and early post-war non-Marxist approach to the fall in fertility rate—seen as due to biological, economic and social factors. Under the head *biology*, excessive density in cities of flats and tenements, and nervous wear and tear, were suggested as a cause of increased neurosis for both men and women, which lessens the desire for procreation. At the time of writing 17.1 per cent of marriages in the USA were cited as childless compared to 6 per cent 18 years before. Under the head *social*, Murkerjee, having observed that the "capitalistic structure of society promotes stratification", maintains that, "if social opportunities be equalised", then "family ambition will disappear and the birth rate would rise". Dumont developed this theory of "social capillarity" studying the causes of family limitation in France. Under the head *economic*, it is pointed out that this motive of family limitation applied in Imperial Rome—care of a family hampered the struggle for wealth. The problem of verification of the various other psychological and cultural hypotheses that appear in the literature, because they are independent variables, has led Western demography to see the birth rate as "mainly the result of social and economic environmental conditions, rather than some underlying trend in family building behaviour, determined by internal or external forces of a non-economic character" (Ian Bowen, *Population*, 1960).

But Western investigators to date have failed to produce a workable population theory, that is, one capable of producing accurate predictions. This failure has led to a revival of interest in the application of Marxist tools of analysis to demography. Thus an American Sydney Coontz in *Population Theory and the Economic Interpretation*, 1957, suggested that the failure has been due to demographers ignoring the qualitative and quantitative implications of long and short run changes in the demand for labour. Before examining the validity of demand for labour analysis in the context of the birth rate, differences in the economic functions of the family according to class will be sketched, to see if they account for fertility differences.

## Economic Functions of the Family

Looking first at the changed economic function of the family of the wealthy, it is significant that for the Romans with the full development of slavery, the large family ceased to be an economic asset. Similarly today, the wealthy family is divorced from production. Through the dowry, family fortunes are merged, while simultaneously through family limitation, integrity of the patrimony is preserved in subsequent generations. However, as Richard Titmuss has noted in *Income Distribution and Social Change*, the highest social classes have recently begun to have larger families—but even here toleration of this new pattern of fertility is related to the economic functions of the family. For the purpose of death duties and taxation ability to sub-divide a fortune among members of the family as "gifts" reduces tax paid.

Whatever its early history, following its constitution, the family of the poor was a joint economic enterprise united in production and consumption. Prior to the Industrial Revolution women were employed in agriculture and industry, but with industrialisation, increased demand for women and children in the factory combined with depreciation in the absolute value of male labour power. Enough has been said to show that differences in the economic function of the family furnish the explanation for the first great fertility difference. Demand for labour analysis explains the fertility differentials among the class divorced from ownership of the instruments of production, since it includes the new middle class.

The usefulness of demand for labour analysis may be illustrated by reference to birth rates during the Industrial Revolution, and the fertility decline as capitalism has evolved.

It is usual to see the population upsurge of the Industrial Revolution as wholly due to a decline in mortality, yet the great increase in the demand for labour suggests at least the possibility of an increase in fertility. In the absence of reliable statistics a definite answer is precluded. Even so, the approach of T. H. Marshall can be used in terms of whether a new fertility pattern is adopted or not. A society in population equilibrium is assumed (either a stationary population or one increasing at a moderately constant rate and without

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emigration or immigration—that is, the size of the population is determined by mortality and fertility rates). Any change in one rate will affect a corresponding change in the other rate. If there is no compensatory change the previous population equilibrium is being supplanted. In England the number of children rose because of the decline in child mortality. Therefore, since the fall in mortality did not lead to a compensating fertility decline, the result is tantamount to the adoption of a new fertility pattern. So population growth in the Industrial Revolution must be analysed in terms of the changes which permitted toleration of this new pattern.

The spread of the factory system meant a great increase in the quantity and reduction in the quality of labour demanded, "by substituting the industry of women and children for that of men" (Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures*, 1835), and elimination of old skills and reduction of individual differences among workers, making "All men equal before the machine" (T. A. Hobson *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, 1916). The factory system lowered the cost of labour power in two ways:

1. Less demand for skill shortened the time and expense required to prepare a worker for productive labour.
2. The employment of women and children further lowered the cost of a man's labour power—as Marx himself said "Machinery by throwing every member of the family on the labour market spreads the value of the man's labour power over his whole family", *Capital* Vol. I.

## Demand for Labour

Thus the economic explanation of the population upsurge in this period is found in the growth of aggregate demand for labour plus reduction in the quality demanded. In France, there was a concomitant fall in fertility and mortality at this time, for France lagged behind Britain's industrial development and had a system of peasant proprietorship established prior to the French Revolution. Thus slow growth in demand for labour permitted in France an absolute increase in population, but insufficient to maintain the previous fertility level following the decline in mortality.

By the last quarter of the 19th century, in contrast, mature capitalism required higher quality labour due to foreign competition. Marshall in testimony to the Royal Commission on the Aged Poor 1893, emphasised the increased efficiency associated with a rise in labour's standard of living. Increased intensity of labour ("speed-up") also occurred: "factory labour is more intense than formerly . . . in the growing strain it imposes upon the nervous system of the operatives". And the increased cost of labour also arose from the need for a literate labour force, e.g. a lorry driver must be able to read to qualify. In the USA, the median number of years education for an unskilled labourer is now about 8.

The relative increase in the demand for higher quality labour is illustrated by the occupation statistics of the major capitalist countries—they show the absolute and relative growth of a "new middle class", in the "same property/class position as the wage-workers" (C. Wright Mills, *White Collar*, 1951). What Colin Clark calls the morphology of economic growth, or historical changes in production, are relevant to an explanation of the growth of a new salaried class of employees. With industrialisation the number employed in primary production declines relatively; the proportion in secondary industry rises "to a maximum" and then declines relative to tertiary production —the associated occupational changes are the gradual elimination of the manual worker and rapid growth in the numbers of clerical and professional workers (C. Clark, *The Conditions of Economic Progress*, 1940).

| 1870 | 1940 | Labour Force |
|---|---|---|
| 33% | 24% | Old Middle class (Farmers, Businessmen, Professionals) |
| 6% | 25% | New Middle class (Managers, Salaried Professionals, Sales People and Office Workers) |
| 61% | 51% | Wage Workers |
| 100% | 100% | (C. W. Mills, *White Collar*) |

With reference to population growth, this historical shift in the demand for labour lengthened and increased the cost of the average period of production of labour power, e.g. in Britain the median number of years of education requisite for office workers and sales people is now about 11.

The rise in the cost of labour power is reflected in the absolute increase in labour's standard of living. The increased goods and services consumed by the modern labour force are necessary cost elements for the maintenance and reproduction of a higher quality of labour. This was recognised by Marshall, "in the Western World the earnings . . . are not much above the lowest that are needed to cover the expenses of rearing and training efficient workers and of sustaining and bringing into activity their full energies". (*Principles of Economics.*)

Also there has been in the Western World a gradual decline in the relative earnings of non-manual labour, e.g. in the USA in 1890 the average income of the salaried worker was twice that of the average wage earner (Mills)—in 1952, wage earners' average weekly earnings were $69.24 compared to $66.63 for salaried workers (R. K. Burns,

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*Journal of Business*, October 1954). This is not due to increased demand for unskilled labour, but to the proportionately greater increase in supply than in demand for labour of higher quality. From 1910-1947, demand for clerks and salesmen rose in the U.S. from 10.2 to 18.2 per cent of the occupied population, "yet supply of this labour was so abundant that its relative renumeration was heavily reduced" (Colin Clark, 2nd edition, 1951). Therefore the rate of increase in the total demand for labour in the U.S. must have fallen, since demand for non-manual labour did not increase proportionately to the decrease in the demand for manual labour. The symptom of this relative over-population is the fall in the remuneration of non-manual labour—leading to a fertility decline since the last quarter of the 19th century, expressing decline in the rate of growth of the long-term demand for labour. Superimposed on the long-term decline are short-run cyclical variations in demand for labour. It is sometimes difficult to demarcate the "short-run period" as e.g., in the U.S. where a prolonged war and post-war boom was accompanied by a great population upsurge.

### Economic Interpretation

The economic interpretation of demography regards as the fundamental determinant of fertility patterns, demand for labour and not democratisation of the knowledge of effective means of contraception. Out of this discussion, certain definite exceptions to Ivor Montagu's suggestion that a falling birth rate accompanies a rising standard of living, emerge, which are short-term variations. The birth rate in France fell during the period of Britain's Industrial Revolution despite no rise in France's standard of living. There was a falling birth-rate in Britain during the 1930s depression—mass unemployment (or lack of demand for labour) and insecurity caused both family limitation and depression deferred marriages—when the standard of living was falling. Conversely, after the war, in Britain, there has been a population upsurge when living standards or the supply price of labour has been rising. Thus demand for labour analysis appears as a more effective method of examining fertility patterns than the index of standard of living. Only in the case of the highest social classes did demand for labour analysis emerge as inappropriate, but even here, fertility patterns seemed to have an economic basis related to the economic functions of the family.

In conclusion, long-term projections for future population in Britain correlate with the long-term demand for labour and indicate continued long-term fertility decline is a function of a slowing down in the rate of economic growth. Although from mid 1961 (when people born around 1947 reached the late teens) to mid 1964, the 15-19 age groups increased over half a million, this is expected to fall back almost as much by 1971, or be 1 per cent above 1961 levels. (*The Age Structure and Regional Distribution of the UK population* 1964-1981, from "Economic Trends", November 1965.) Even so, the economic interpretation of demography emphasises the relativity of population laws. The conclusions reached in this discussion do not mean demand for labour will always continue to be the prime determinant of fertility patterns; on the contrary, as Coontz points out, "when man is emancipated from the exigencies arising from scarcity, then undoubtedly, a new law of population will come into existence".

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